

THE TIMES

50P

No. 65,761

SATURDAY DECEMBER 14 1996

TODAY

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MONDAY

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Britain voices dissent on euro target

Breakthrough on terms for single currency

FROM PHILIP WEBSTER AND CHARLES BREMNER IN DUBLIN

EUROPE took two important strides towards the creation of the single currency yesterday after Germany and France resolved their long-running dispute over the rules of monetary union and millions of Europeans were given their first glimpse of the euro banknotes that will enter their pockets in 2002.

However, John Major and Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, united to voice doubts about the ability of even the keenest countries to reach the 1999 target date. The Prime Minister admitted that there would be a huge effort to do so but he was very "dubious" over whether it was possible.

Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, and President Chirac of France ended a dangerous deadlock by agreeing to a compromise brokered by the Brussels commission for dealing with errant members of the new currency zone. The accord came as the European Monetary Institute, the body charged with preparing for the single currency, unveiled Europe's multi-coloured banknotes of the future.

Mr Major, in spite of Britain's current opt-out on monetary union, entered his own reservations. He suggested that the space allowed for the national symbol was not large enough. Herr Kohl, by contrast, was said to have squealed with delight.

"Unless the economics are right people will shy away from January 1, 1999," Mr Major said of the reaffirmed starting date for a

single currency. The Chancellor echoed this view: "I, too, am not at all sure that we'll make January 1, 1999. Getting all these details right matters far more than some technical timetable."

Mr Major rushed from the summit after his speech to appear at a hastily arranged press conference at which he set out the tough line he had taken on some issues being discussed in the inter-governmental conference on the future of Europe. He made plain that he had opposed any extension of majority voting and demanded an exemption for Britain from the 48-hour week.

He also voiced his strongest words of caution against the Franco-German plans to bypass reluctant states. While Britain had backed a more flexible Europe, he said, the wrong sort of flexibility, forcing those who did not wish to integrate into unwanted obligations, "would blow the European Union apart".

While the appearance of the notes was symbolic, the agreement on the so-called stability pact has cleared a big hurdle on the road to monetary union and its starting date, reaffirmed yesterday. Finance ministers had spent much of the night trying to resolve the gap between Bonn's demands for tough automatic penalties for high-spending members of the future currency and the wishes of the rest of Europe to leave room for a political judgment by ministers.

The Irish Finance Minister, Ruairi Quinn, warned his colleagues during the night that a

failure to agree could damage prospects for the introduction of the euro and give heart to those who did not want it to happen. The outstanding issues went to the leaders to resolve and at 4pm a deal was announced. Herr Kohl appeared to have made the bigger concession, accepting the demands of the French, backed by Britain and most of the other leaders, for ministers to be involved in the judgments about levying fines. Mr Chirac in turn raised the threshold beyond which countries would be automatically exempted from paying fines.

Mr Clarke welcomed the stability pact deal, saying that, irrespective of whether Britain went into a single currency, it was right that it should be run on the basis of proper financial discipline. While Britain backed Germany on the need for strict rules, it supported France in its view that the system must not be applied too rigidly or without any democratic control.

Mr Major told his news conferences that the launch of the single currency would be the most far-reaching decision the EU had taken. The United Kingdom expected to meet the Maastricht criteria but would continue to exercise its opt-out because "too much of what we need to know is still a mystery".

The Prime Minister denied that he had been treated at the summit as a "lame duck" because he had lost his parliamentary majority.

Kohl backs down, page 2
Leading article, page 19

France drops UN post veto

France dropped its threat to veto the appointment of Kofi Annan as the next Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Ghanaian UN official had already won the backing of Britain and the rest of the Security Council. Page 13

Times sales hit record

Average daily sales of The Times hit a new record of 861,931 last month, according to the Audit Bureau of Circulation. Sales of The Times have now risen by more than 500,000 since autumn 1993. Telegraph dispute, page 2

By the way: The Times program...
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Notes fit the bill but islands shortchanged

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN DUBLIN

PLAY it safe, was the order given to the designers of the banknotes for the euro. Europe's future single currency, which were released with great fanfare in Dublin yesterday.

The winning entry, a tasteful assemblage of windows, bridges and gateways through the ages, fitted the euro-sensitive bill impeccably. Gender-neutral, with no wildlife or person, the generic edifices could not be traced to any place or race.

But first the Greeks and then the Finns got out their magnifying glasses. "What about our islands?" the cry went up. The background maps on the multi-coloured notes, designed by Robert Kalina of the Austrian central bank, had taken liberties with geography, inflating the Aegean sea, neglecting islands from Shetland to Greece, and exciting Turkey, an eager EU wannabe.

Alexandre Lamfalussy, president of the European Monetary Institute (EMI), the authority responsible for producing the money, cleared his throat. "These are sketches. The

winning designer will spend six months on producing a final design. Part of his duty is to make sure the geography is OK," he said.

The Greeks, whose economy is nowhere near to qualifying for the single currency, were reminded that they had won the battle to get their language on to the notes, which feature "euro" in Latin and Greek letters.

John Major said he had not studied the designs but added: "I have had time to note that Cyprus, Turkey and the Balcans islands have been left off the map." Territorial sensitivities aside, the series of seven notes, ranging from five to 500 euros, were met with approval. Each note depicts a bridge in the style of the seven ages of European culture - Classical, Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque and Rococo, the age of iron and glass, and 20th century architecture. A personality will probably feature on many notes since one fifth Continued on page 2, col 5

Just 11% bother to vote

BY JILL SHERMAN, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE lowest turnout in a parliamentary election since 1945 gave Labour its second victory in 24 hours.

Richard Corbett held the Merseyside West seat in the European Parliament with 54 per cent of the vote. He attributed the low poll to the weather and the time of year. Just 11.4 per cent of the constituency's 515,549 voters turned out and the

votes took only 90 minutes to count at the Everton Park sports centre. The turnout for the previous European election in Merseyside West in June 1994 was 26.2 per cent.

Mr Corbett said: "The crucial thing is that we won and with very convincing figures that in any general election would give us an overall majority in the House of Commons."

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Prince urges West to foster ties and learn from Islam

BY RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

THE Prince of Wales yesterday condemned modern materialism and made a passionate plea for the West to learn from Islam.

Calling for a renewed "sense of the sacred", the Prince, a practising Anglican, said there had been a "loss of meaning" in Western society and cited traditional Islamic culture as an example of how spirituality can be integrated with modernity.

Addressing a private meeting of 70 academics, businessmen, religious leaders and civil servants at Wilton Park, Sussex, a Foreign Office conference centre, he said: "Modern materialism, in my humble opinion, is unbalanced and increasingly damaging in its long-term consequences. Science has tried to assume a monopoly, even a tyranny, over our understanding. We are only now beginning to gauge the disastrous results of this outlook."

The outcome was a failure to understand tradition. "Indeed, tradition is positively discriminated against, as if it was some socially unacceptable disease."

The "sombre and horrifying" consequences of separating science from ethical, moral and sacred considerations had resulted in episodes such as BSE, he said.

Although the Prince first expressed his sympathies with Islam in a speech at Oxford in 1993, yesterday's address was his strongest statement on the relationship between Islam and the West.

The Prince takes regular advice on Islamic issues from a group of 12 religious leaders

and academics. He told the conference that British schools should have more Muslim teachers, and encouraged the exchange of teachers to help establish new links.

"Everywhere in the world, people are seemingly wanting to learn English. But in the West, in turn, we need to be taught by Islamic teachers how to learn once again with our hearts, as well as our heads."

Health, education, architecture and the environment would particularly benefit, he



The Prince yesterday

said. Medicine "remains too often one-dimensional" in its approach. "Hospitals need to be conceived and, above all, designed to reflect wholeness of healing if they are to help the process of recovery in a more complete way," the Prince said.

Dr Farhan Nizami, director of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, said: "It is a plea that must and should be welcomed equally by Muslims as well as by westerners."

Prince's speech, page 18

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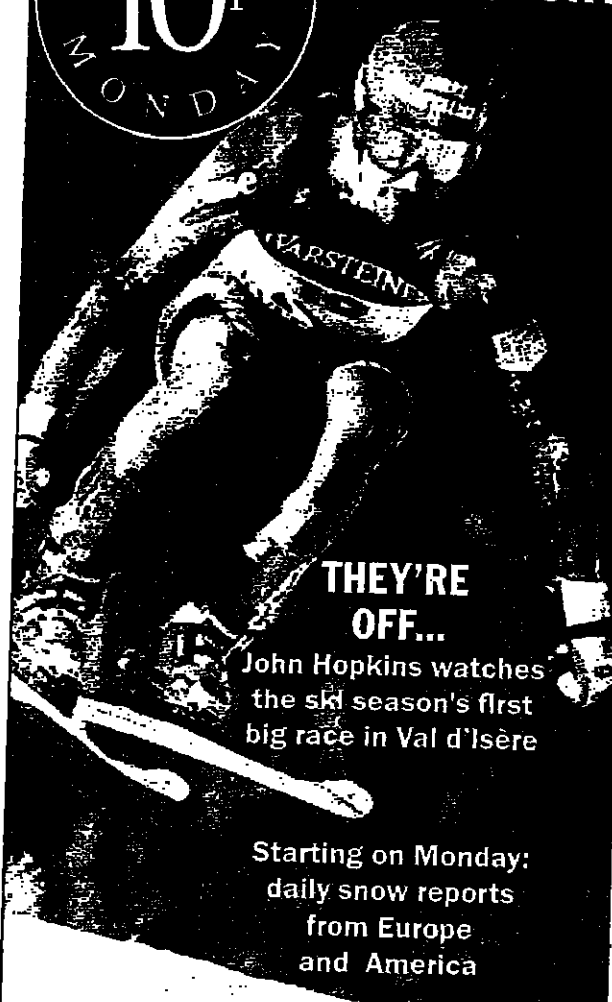


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**MATTHEW
PARRIS**
Columnist
of the Year

Germany backs down over fines for euro defaulters

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN DUBLIN

WITH a less-than-bracing handshake, Helmut Kohl and Jacques Chirac sealed their differences yesterday on the machinery for managing monetary union. The quarrel on the "stability pact" focused ostensibly on mere percentage points, but it had taken 17 hours of almost non-stop negotiation to solve and had threatened to unsettle the drive towards the single currency.

While the leaders resorted to the standard summit claims of "no losers, a triumph for Europe", the consensus around Dublin Castle, including the Germans, was that Herr Kohl had climbed down for the sake of keeping monetary union on the road. "The Chancellor has been gracious and he now has to go home and sell this to the public," a senior German official said.

"He will manage, but it won't be easy." At the core of the quarrel lies one of the most sensitive aspects of the project for launching monetary union on January 1, 1999: the degree to which members of the future euro zone will retain sovereignty over their own budgetary policy.

The Maastricht treaty lays down the framework for enforcing discipline on governments that run "excessive deficits". The Germans are especially insistent, fearing that countries with poor records, such as Italy, Portugal and Spain, could be tempted to export their inflation throughout the euro zone without threat of punishment. With this in mind, Theo Waigel, Germany's Finance Minister, presented an outline for tough automatic sanctions a year ago. Other members accepted the principle that governments would be fined up to 0.5 per cent of their gross domestic product if they ran budget deficits over 3 per cent of GDP. At present levels, this could mean Britain being fined up to £4 billion.

But a majority, led by France, balked at the automatic nature of the sanctions, insisting that latitude be given for political discretion. For many, including Paris and London, automatic fines looked like a recipe for future rule by the European Central Bank.

The breakthrough for France and the others was when Germany agreed effectively to waive the automatic nature of the penalties. Fines will have to be approved by a majority of EU Finance Ministers and countries will be exempt from fines if they can prove they are victims of exceptional recession.

M Chirac said that he had achieved his goal and that fines would be assessed "case by case". Decisions on whether to fine will be taken by majority voting in the Council of Finance Ministers, meaning that no country has a veto.

Yves Thibault de Silguy, the Commissioner for Monetary Affairs, said, with revealing honesty: "The member states recognised that the euro is more important than domestic sensitivities."

TAKING NOTE

■ British banknotes can be traced to the early 17th century when goldsmiths handed out notes recording the value of cash and jewellery deposited with them to earn interest. The pledges were recognised as currency when the Bank of England was established in 1694.

■ In 1948, the Bank of England printed 11 £1 million notes for internal transactions but had second thoughts and destroyed ten. The one held back and given as a retirement souvenir is now worth more than £16,000.

■ The metal strip in notes was introduced in 1942 after attempts by Germany to destabilise the British economy by flooding neutral countries with forged Bank of England notes.

■ The design of notes is conservative: while reflecting the national identity, they must also represent stability and appear valuable. Above all, they must be difficult to copy. The US dollar is the world's most counterfeited note.



Viv Hollister said the single currency betrayed First World War veterans

Note of divergence on new monopoly money

BY ADRIAN LEE

JOHN HEATH took one look at the new currency and raised his eyes heavenwards. "It's Monopoly money, isn't it? They're not serious, are they? We've had the old pound notes long enough, so let's keep them. How are the old people going to get used to this lot? Look at the colours. I am against it, without a doubt. It's tragic that it's come to this."

Mr Heath, 44, a Ministry of Agriculture messenger from Wapping, east London, said: "I suppose if they bring it in I will have to use it but I don't see any need. I've been to Europe on holiday and it's no problem to go down the travel agents and change some money. These are a bit comic book, aren't they?"

Geertje Haayer, 37, from Assen, The Netherlands, was more positive. "I like the notes showing a bridge between Europe and other parts of the world. I think there are still many problems to be solved but a single currency will help us all to have better plans."

"But, it is also important that the countries keep their differences. The notes are very different to the Dutch currency but I like them. It is good that they show all the European countries."

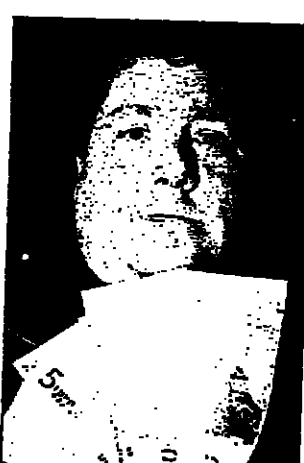
Her husband, Bert, also 37, who was wearing a Union Jack bobble hat, said: "I like them. The colours are good. I think our children, who will grow up with them, will be pleased, too."

David Lambert, 51, an insurance broker from Amersham, Buckinghamshire, said: "I am a pro-European, so I am all for the euro, but these designs lack the authority of pounds sterling. They have a continental feel and look to them, but I would still be happy to use them."

Sarah King, 64, of Grays, Essex, liked the notes. "The green 100 note stands out very well. They have chosen stark colours which makes



The Haayers, left: liked design; Hanningers boring



King, left: notes are easy to use; Heath: a tragedy

them easy to tell apart. That is a problem with £20 and £10 notes. As long as it isn't just an excuse to put prices up I would be happy to use them."

Ari Hanninga, 34, a project manager from Hyvinkää, Finland, said: "They are nothing special. The designs are boring. They should also be the same size so that you can fit them easily into your pocket."

The yellow 200 note does not even look like real money. It is too bright, not serious enough. And I don't like the maps. Britain is too thin, they have got Finland

wrong, too. But, if they make it easier to travel, it is a good idea."

Viv Hollister, 44, who runs a jellied eel stall in Chapel Street Market, Islington, north London, said: "I feel cross and betrayed. When I serve elderly people who fought in the trenches, it's as if they are taking another one in the side."

However, Sir Terence Conran, the restaurateur and designer, said: "They are a fine example of graphic design. The notes would be marvellous for use by some 1930s electricity company."

New notes fit the bill

Continued from page 1

of one side has been reserved for a national motif, which in Britain's case would probably be the monarch.

Strictly speaking the euro, to be launched on January 1, 1999 is worthless until it goes into circulation in 2002, but for present purposes the Bank of England values it at one ecu, or 75 pence.

Mr Lamfalussy said the EMI, the Frankfurt-based body which will turn into the European Central Bank on the euro's birthday, had been reassured to find that the winning design, chosen from among 44 entrants from all the member states, scored the

highest marks both with the jury of experts and with the public. Four British firms had contributed to the competition, including the Bank of England and De La Rue.

Mr Lamfalussy wielded the full stock of Euro-metaphors to explain the choice of motifs. Windows and gateways "symbolise the spirit of openness and co-operation in the European Union", he said. Bridges meant communication.

The design, with its mixture of history, technology and art, "epitomised the dawn of the new common Europe and its common cultural heritage and the vision of a common future

in the next century, indeed the new millennium."

The EMI has the daunting job of supervising production, which will start in 1998. There are an estimated 127 billion banknotes in circulation among the 15 member states, with a life expectancy of two years. The cost of taking in the billions of marks, francs and other notes and replacing them with euros is estimated in the hundreds of millions of pounds, a charge that will dent the forecast benefits of the new currency in its first year. Europe must wait another year for a glimpse of euro coins, which have yet to be designed.

Auditors question paper's sales figures

BY ALEXANDRA FREAN
MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

OFFICIAL newspaper industry auditors last night delayed publication of monthly circulation figures because of a dispute with the *Daily* and *Sunday Telegraph* about how the papers' sales figures should be reported.

The Audit Bureau of Circulations was concerned about the inclusion in the *Telegraph's* figures of about 100,000 copies that it sells through a cut-price subscription offer.

The dispute followed a complaint from News International, owner of *The Times*, that the *Telegraph* was in breach of bureau regulations requiring papers to list copies sold at the full price separately from those sold at a lesser rate and those distributed free to readers by third parties such as hotels and airlines.

The *Telegraph* did not change its figures yesterday in time for publication of the bureau's monthly bulletin, so the auditors decided to delay the disclosure of the November results for any national newspapers.

The *Daily Telegraph's* unaudited full-price sales for November are estimated to be just over 900,000, with total sales of 1.1 million. That compares with 802,000 full-price sales for *The Times* and total daily sales of 861,931.

Peter Stothard, Editor of *The Times*, said: "We are extremely pleased with a November circulation of 861,931, which has yet again narrowed the gap between us and the *Telegraph* to a record low since the war. Comparing the circulations of the two at full cover price, we estimate that gap to be a mere 100,000 copies."

The *Telegraph's* failure to comply with the ABC's requirement that its cut-price offers should be properly reported merely confirms that they are well aware of how close we are to overtaking their sale."

Establishing accurate full-price sales is of critical importance for newspaper publishers because it is on these figures, rather than the overall figures, that advertising rates are based.

The discrepancy in the *Telegraph's* figures came to light earlier this month when the paper made a trade announcement that it was selling about 100,000 copies through a special cut-price subscription offer. Its "lesser price" sales for October, however, were listed at less than half that — 49,981 — suggesting that the cut-price subscriptions were being included in the full-price sales.

The argument about the *Telegraph's* circulation marks the latest phase in the circulation battle between *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Times*, which was sparked in 1993 when *The Times* cut its price to 20p. Since then, *The Times's* circulation has risen from the 350,000 level, while *Telegraph's* sales have hovered at about the one million mark.

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TIN1

Killer is jailed for assaults on girls

By Stewart Tindler
CRIME CORRESPONDENT

A MURDERER who escaped the hangman with two hours to spare 40 years ago was jailed for six years yesterday for indecently assaulting two girls.

Albert Goozee, 73, was sentenced to death in 1956 for killing Norma Leakey, 14, in the New Forest. The judge ordered that the case relating to the murder of her mother, Lydia, should remain on file. Goozee was judged to be suffering from schizophrenia and moved from his death cell to Broadmoor.

Yesterday Goozee, who has been in and out of prison during the past 20 years after being released on licence, was told he might spend the rest of his days behind bars after assaulting the girls, aged 12 and 13. During the trial at Maidstone Crown Court the girls described how Goozee assaulted them after playing them with drink and cigarettes.

Yesterday Judge Gower told Goozee the jury had cleared him of rape charges but one of the two cases had been "one of the most serious cases of indecent assault that I have ever had to deal with". Goozee's "horrifying" record should be considered if it was felt he should be released, he said.

Goozee served 15 years of his murder conviction before being released in 1971. Two years later he was back in court for theft and going equipped for theft. Goozee was jailed for 18 months for wounding in November 1982 and recalled to his life sentence. Five months later he was jailed for 18 months for wounding a neighbour. He was released on licence in September 1993.

Jury finds pupil who wielded knife not guilty of murder or manslaughter

Public schoolboy cleared of stabbing teenager to death

By Paul Wilkinson

A PUBLIC schoolboy who stabbed a pupil from the local comprehensive in the heart was cleared of murder yesterday. The boy, who is 16 tomorrow but cannot be named for legal reasons, was also found not guilty of the manslaughter of Ian Gamble, 16.

As the verdicts were announced at Teesside Crown Court the teenager, who at 6ft was seven inches taller than his victim, dropped his head and wept. In the public gallery, his mother, 50, a divorced hairdresser, burst into tears. Later she said: "There is a sense of tremendous relief for my son and all of the family but it is tinged with regret and great sadness for the mother of the victim, Ian Gamble, and

his family. We are thinking of them at the moment."

Sheila Gamble, the victim's mother, left court without commenting. The death of Ian, 16, was her second loss of a son in tragic circumstances. He died just a short way from a memorial to his brother Darren, also 16, accidentally poisoned by exhaust fumes as he and a friend sat in a car in a garage.

Releasing the accused teenager, who was a pupil at Barnard Castle School in Co Durham, Mr Justice Moses told him: "Nobody listening to this can have any doubt about the terrible results of carrying knives and I know you will reflect on that for the rest of your life."

The court had heard how

the pupil at the £8,300-a-year school had plunged the 4in blade into Gamble during a fight. The jury accepted his story that he produced the weapon to frighten off Gamble, who had been punching him.

The accused teenager, from Bishop Auckland, Co Durham, had drunk bitter and cider before going to a disco at the public school on February 24 this year. After leaving, he and friend were chased by Gamble and other pupils of Teesside Comprehensive.

The prosecution had claimed that the youth had waved the weapon at his pursuers, shouting "Do you want some of this?", but the accused said he had taken the knife out only to "look big in front of my friends".

He said: "I just wanted to show them the knife to get them to back off so I could run away. Then I saw Gamble out of the corner of my eye holding his chest. I realised when I was running away the knife had made contact with Ian Gamble."

The teenager, who won a scholarship in the school and hopes to become a pilot, said it "was all an accident", but he made no effort to call the police or emergency services. Instead he washed the knife, put it on top of a cupboard and went to bed.

The day after Ian's killing Mrs Gamble, a care assistant, said: "I can't believe it has happened again. Ian was such a lovely lad. Very outgoing. He lived life to the full. There wasn't an ounce of badness in his body. He had his whole life ahead of him. He was talented and liked by everyone. It is just such a waste." Ian's step-



Ian Gamble: "He was liked by everyone. It is just such a waste," said his mother

father, John Pringle, 39, a lorry driver, said: "You would have to go a long way to find anyone who would say anything bad about Ian."

"He was a popular lad, not only with his school pals but with older lads as well. He was never in trouble with the police."

"Teenagers have always had the odd scuffle, but in the past it would be a couple of punches. Nowadays it seems some people just automatical-

ly reach for a knife. You never expect something like this to happen to your family. To happen twice is just unbelievable."

Paul Harrison, head of Teesside Comprehensive said: "Since taking up my post at the beginning of this term I have come across nothing to suggest an unhealthy rivalry exists between this school and Barnard Castle School. There is no history of bad blood between pupils from the two

establishments. It would be wrong and irresponsible for anyone to try to create tension where, to the best of my knowledge, none exists."

Frank McNamara, headmaster of Barnard Castle School, was not available for comment. Detective Chief Inspector Tom Ryan, who investigated the death, said: "There are no winners in tragic cases such as this and both families have endured no end of suffering."

Baby is saved by judge's ruling

By A Staff Reporter

A JUDGE has saved the life of an unborn child whose mother had an extreme phobia of needles. Mr Justice Kirkwood ordered that the 20-year-old woman's refusal to have a needle inserted for a hospital drip should be over-ruled.

The drip enabled her to have a Caesarean section. As a result of judge's decision at an emergency evening sitting of the High Court Family Division, mother and baby are thriving, lawyers said.

The case came to light yesterday in a judgment by Mr Justice Kirkwood. The judge said that the emergency application had been made to him at just after 6pm on December 5 and that by 6.24pm he had made the order that allowed the hospital authorities to insert the needle for the drip, which was necessary for the operation.

The mother, from southern England, who was identified only as "L", has since thanked the hospital for obtaining consent to set up the drip.

The judge said that she had been in labour for some hours by the time of the court hearing, but the labour had been obstructed. Specialists decided she needed a Caesarean operation, without which the baby would die and the mother's health and well-being would be at risk.

The woman told the doctors, however, that she had an "extreme phobia about needles" and was unable to consent to the procedure that would involve putting a needle drip into her.

Mr Justice Kirkwood said: he took the view that the mother's "affliction with a severe phobia about needles" had put her wellbeing and that of her unborn child at risk. "I held that her extreme needle phobia amounted to an involuntary compulsion that disabled her from weighing treatment information in the balance to make a choice."

Life sentence for 'war on women'

By Lin Jenkins

A SERIAL sex attacker who tortured women to satisfy his drug-induced lust was jailed for life yesterday. James Oliver, 25, conducted a "war on women" while high on crack cocaine, the Old Bailey was told.

Wendy Joseph, for the prosecution, said that his victims were threatened with death if they did not meet his demands. His first victim, a journalist in her 50s, had undergone a personality change and been left suicidal after the attack.

Oliver got in through an open balcony window while her husband and daughter were away and her son was asleep in another room. He was wearing a stocking mask and said that he had a friend holding a gun to the head of the person in the next room. He then raped her.

Miss Joseph said: "She was terrified for her life. Since then she has undergone a personality change and her entire life has been affected."

Oliver's last victim, a 36-year-old American lawyer, was attacked while staying with a friend. He woke her

and threatened to kill her while holding a long metal instrument in his hand. The woman said in a statement: "The shock and rage I felt wondering whether this random attack might take my life are beyond description."

Oliver, who was unemployed, was a different man when not on drugs and could not recall carrying out the attacks, his lawyer, David Christie, said. "He feels real remorse for the offences and disbelieves he could do such terrible things. He presents as a very mild-mannered young man."

Oliver admitted one charge of rape and four of indecent assault between 1991 and 1995. He also stole from the homes of his victims. The judge said his priority was the protection of other women and that Oliver, from Hornsey, north London, must serve at least 11 years before being considered for parole.

"Although these terrible crimes were committed over a considerable period with breaks between offences, they amount to a war on women," Judge Gordon said.

Secret agenda on council business

By A Staff Reporter

TERRY Hurlstone thought his wife, a Liberal Democrat councillor, was simply dedicated when she went away on council business at weekends. He thought she and Arthur Latham, the 68-year-old leader of Havering council and a former Labour MP, were engaged on "fact-finding missions all around the country".

But Mr Hurlstone, who stood for Parliament as a Liberal Democrat at the last three general elections, began to suspect his 46-year-old wife Caroline was having an affair when he called the hotel she was supposed to be staying at and found that she was not registered there. He told Snaresbrook Crown Court yesterday: "I suspect they went to the Brecon Beacons in Wales for a weekend."

His fears were confirmed when he discovered love notes scrawled on the back of Mr Latham's business cards, he said. Mr Hurlstone, 57, said: "I had pleaded with him on four or five previous occasions begging him to leave her alone. I said the meetings had to stop, they must stop these

fact-finding missions all over the country otherwise I would tell his wife. He just sort of sneered at me and said that was for him and her."

The following day Mr Hurlstone visited Mr Latham's home in Romford to confront Mrs Latham with details of the affair but, finding her out, began fighting with the councillor, the jury was told.

Mr Hurlstone said Mr Latham went to hit him but he had blocked the blow and had punched him in the mouth. He said Mr Latham had then begun to tremble so much that "his false teeth shook out of his mouth" and he had protested that the affair. He then clutched his chest and claimed he was having a heart attack. In a notebook Mr Latham had urged Mrs Hurlstone not to leave her husband. He wrote: "I do not want to destroy my marriage or my family and move into a situation where neither of us would be happy."

Mr Hurlstone, of Romford, Essex, denies theft and common assault on Mr Latham. The trial continues.

Princess's lawyer offers to slum it for sake of everyday countryfolk

By Alexandra Freeman

THE leading lawyer Anthony Julius has joined the campaign to save Ambridge's Grundy family from eviction.

Mr Julius, an addict of *The Archers* who also finds time to act as solicitor to Diana, Princess of Wales, yesterday volunteered to represent the hapless fictional tenants should their case reach the Lands Tribunal. Mr Julius, who usually charges up to £250 an hour for his services, said he would waive his fee.

"I'm a great *Archers* fan and I wouldn't want anything to happen to the Grundys," he said.

His offer follows a potentially alarming development in BBC Radio 4's everyday story of countryfolk. Eddie Grundy, beloved among *Archers* fans for his wide-boy antics and Country and Western singing, is threatened with eviction from his 110-acre farm. The consequences for Eddie's family - his comradegoney father Joe, his



Eddie Grundy, left, played by Trevor Harrison, could be saved from eviction by Anthony Julius



long-suffering wife Clarrie and their two sons William and Edward - are grave. As Ambridge has no council housing, they may be forced to move away.

The Grundys' troubles have been caused by the dashing but ruthless landowner Simon Pemberton, who is attempting to evict

them from his land because they are not making enough money from their farm.

The BBC's studios at Pebble Mill in Birmingham have been inundated with letters of support for the Grundys in the past week, not to mention a good deal of hate mail for Mr Pemberton.

The Grundys have won

cross-party support, with Angela Browning, the junior agriculture minister, and Gavin Strang, the Shadow Agriculture Minister, have expressed their concern at the plight of the family.

Vanessa Williams, editor of *The Archers*, said yesterday that the Grundys would be unable to accept Mr Julius's help. "We are very grateful to him, but in real life a family like the Grundys would not be able to afford a top-flight lawyer like that and we have to be realistic," she said.

Mr Julius had hoped to join a long line of real public figures to have played themselves in the series. These include Princess Margaret, the Duke of Westminster, Terry Wogan, and Annette Rice and Britt Ekland.

Last night's episode did, however, provide some hope for the Grundys when their representative from the Tenant Farmers' Association pledged to help them fight their eviction notice.



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The Sunday Times

The killer who said sorry



Sean O'Callaghan, the disaffected IRA gunman who betrayed his comrades out of revulsion, writes for the first time about his childhood in the Irish republican heartland, the murders he committed, the crisis of conscience that made him an informer and the danger he faces in deciding to speak out against terrorism

THE SUNDAY TIMES
TODAY

Wife works for Labour HQ while on compassionate leave to care for sick husband

Civil servant at centre of Blair radio poll riddle

BY ANDREW PIERCE AND TIM JONES

THE Labour Party worker at the centre of an attempt to rig the Radio 4 Today Personality of the Year contest is a senior civil servant who was given unpaid leave of absence to care for her sick husband.

In her application for leave, Jules Hurry, a £35,000-a-year civil servant, did not tell the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food that she was going to work for the Labour Party three days a week. The leave was timed from November to May, by which time the general election has to be called.

Senior officials at the ministry were astonished to learn that the name of Ms Hurry, a civil servant of 30 years' standing, headed the leaked Labour Party letter at the centre of the organised attempt to deliver victory for Mr Blair in the competition. The BBC disqualified Mr Blair and suspended the voting.

Richard Packer, the Permanent Secretary at the ministry,

learnt of her involvement with the party when he read *The Times* yesterday. Sir Robin Butler, the Cabinet Secretary, was in contact with Mr Packer yesterday.

The Cabinet Office and the ministry tried, without success, to contact Ms Hurry at her north London home. A ministry spokesman said: "I can confirm there is a Cabinet Office inquiry under way."

The controversy comes days after Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, accused civil servants of acting as fifth columnists and leaking information to the Labour Party. "It is a very sensitive issue," said a Cabinet Office source. "Civil servants who work for political parties should be involved only in light clerical duties, not high-profile campaigning."

The confirmation of the inquiry heaped further pressure on the party. Mr Blair and other senior Labour figures were forced throughout

the day to deny any involvement with the little-known Audience Participation Unit, which issued the letter.

It emerged yesterday that Peter Mandelson, the aide to Mr Blair, is responsible for the unit, which is based within his campaign department. Mr Mandelson, the MP for Hartlepool, denied that Ms Hurry had written the letter. He said that one of her colleagues, "another more junior member of staff", was responsible. His statement caused surprise among his colleagues.

Other sources named Phil Royal, the candidates' liaison officer, as the author. Nobody at Labour Party headquarters was able to explain why the name of Ms Hurry and not of Mr Royal was on top of the memo. Mr Royal, far from being junior to Ms Hurry, is a full-time paid official who joined Mr Mandelson's campaign department five months ago.

He was the paid party agent

in the two Lewisham marginal seats that Labour captured at the last election from two government ministers. "Everyone knows who Phil is, he is highly regarded," a party worker said last night.

Labour officials were evasive when asked about the Audience Participation Unit, the existence of which came to public knowledge only when the memorandum about the competition was leaked.

The unit, made up of four part-time staff, is based at the media centre at Millbank Tower. It was set up earlier this year to ensure that party members made their voices heard, without revealing their Labour loyalties, on television and radio phone-ins and audience participation programmes.

Call Nick Ross on Radio 4 and the Radio 5 morning magazine programme are its principal targets, along with local radio. The unit urges members to write to local and



Peter Mandelson says the letter was written by a junior colleague to Ms Hurry

national newspapers. Brian Mawhinney, the Tory party chairman, wrote to Mr Blair last night seeking answers about the role of the unit. "I heard you say on television that you knew nothing about this matter. People know that

nothing happens in the Labour Party without your agreement," he said. "They will only believe it if you take steps to disband the unit. Do you, or do you not, take the responsibility for the actions of your own officials?"

Labour, which has disowned the letter, has begun an internal inquiry. A spokeswoman, asked if Mr Royal would be disciplined and whether the unit would be closed, replied: "It's an internal matter and nothing to do with you."

The future looked bleak last night for Ms Hurry, who

worked in the development of rural policy. A trade union activist, she was given a two-year secondment in 1988 to work for the Civil and Public Services Association. "She has a lot of explaining to do," said a Whitehall official.

Her husband, Alan Griffiths, is receiving treatment from a London hospital and walks with the aid of a stick. He works occasionally for the Liberal Democrats. The couple live in a £300,000 house in Islington, ten minutes from Mr Blair's home.

Letters, page 19

Question time for a fair audience

BY ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

BROADCASTING companies go to great lengths to ensure that political parties and interest groups are unable to rig audience participation programmes and phone-ins.

Audiences for shows such as BBC's *Question Time* and ITV's *Jonathan Dimbleby*, where members of the public get the chance to put questions directly to politicians and other public figures, are vetted to ensure that a wide range of viewpoints is represented.

Those wanting to be one of the 250 in the *Question Time* audience have to fill in a form giving their age, gender and occupation, and indicating their voting intentions.

Christopher Capron, the series editor of *Question Time*, said that once the programme's researchers have selected several hundred potential audience members, their completed application forms are fed through a computer. This then makes a final selection, ensuring that there is a balance of supporters for

each main political viewpoint and an accurate demographic reflection of the electorate.

"I can put my hand on my heart and say that we are unriggable on any meaningful scale," Mr Capron said. "You may get people lying about their voting intentions, but they would then have to get selected by other criteria."

Mr Capron's production company had a contractual agreement with the BBC to ensure that its audiences were balanced.

Mr Capron said, however, that if the programme, which is recorded in a different location every week, is short of audience members representing a particular viewpoint it may ring the local constituency party office to offer them tickets. This happens very rarely.

Edward Morgan, editor of *Jonathan Dimbleby*, ITV's Sunday lunchtime programme, said: "Nothing is fool-proof, but the weird thing is how little the political parties do try to rig it."

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Winter Season

17 December - 12 February

Cinderella
Swan Lake
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THE ROYAL BALLET

Cannabis 'star' upheld Raleigh family tradition

By LIN JENKINS

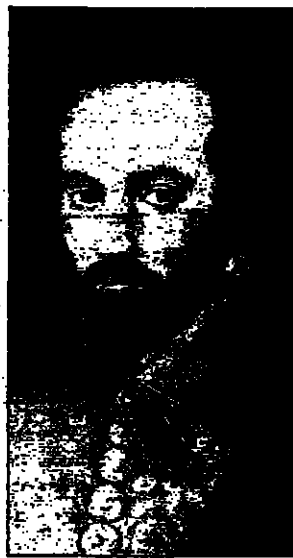
AN OXFORD graduate claiming descent from Sir Walter Raleigh, the Elizabethan adventurer who introduced tobacco to Britain, boasted to a judge yesterday that he grew the finest cannabis in the country, which produced a "vastly superior smoke".

It was a boast backed by Home Office scientists who found his plants had the highest narcotic content they had recorded.

Robin Scott used specialised heating, watering and lighting systems to get the best from his plants. He put in years of research, reading more than 50 books on the subject, smoking thousands of "joints" and talking to hundreds of people involved with the drug.

Police found a complete record of his production trials in a book entitled "Captain's Log, Star Date January, 1995, Planet Earth." Every plant he had grown was listed, with details of its breeding, growth rate, yield and soil type.

Scott, 48, denied two charges of producing cannabis, one of supplying the drug, one of possession and another of intent to supply. He told Truro Crown Court in Cornwall: "I believe it is God's will that we should grow this miraculous healing plant. We believe we are deeply privi-



Raleigh: Scott claimed to be a descendant

leged to be involved. We feel a moral obligation to make marijuana available to as many people as possible."

He added: "I have nothing to say in mitigation because I am not a guilty man. Sentence and be damned." He was jailed for four years. Compared with his alleged ancestor, whose tobacco was grown in Virginia, it was a moderate sentence. Sir Walter was executed for treason in 1618.

When police raided Scott's

cottage on Common Moor, near Liskeard, in December last year, they found 845 plants. In interviews Scott conceded that he charged up to £100 an ounce and had been collecting up to £3,000 a week. He accepted that he had produced 474 ounces of cannabis with a street value of between £35,000 and £47,000.

He had told drug squad detectives: "You are talking to a star. I grow the best marijuana in the country."

The former accountant said the drug had made his love life with his wife Adrienne, 47, blossom and that they had even fed it to their 14-year-old Labrador and noticed an improvement in his health and appetite within a week.

"My cannabis sativa plant is a tall, graceful plant and in the opinion of most connoisseurs a vastly superior smoke. You could say it is the champagne of cannabis, as opposed to the Newcastle brand."

"My wife and I probably know more about cannabis than anyone else in the country, having read about 50 books, smoked thousands of joints and talked to hundreds of people on both the legal and illegal sides of the cannabis business."

Scott, educated at Rugby School and Corpus Christi, said he had first used cannabis while an "aristocratic hip-



Robin Scott, who boasted in court about his home-grown cannabis, and his wife Adrienne were both jailed

py" in San Francisco. He later founded the Medical Marijuana Foundation in an attempt to get the drug legalised.

He and his wife married in 1979 and have two children, Sally, 19, and David, 15. Scott joined the Church of Scientology in 1973 and became a minister, but left in 1981 and claims he was made bankrupt after the church brought a civil case against him, settled out of court.

Michael Brabin, for the

prosecution, said that of the money Scott made not a penny went into research. "Scott had great ambitions but not to serve his fellow men. He recorded his new year resolution for 1993 as to make a million out of growing the drug."

Scott told the judge, Recorder David Titchmarsh: "I have nothing to say in mitigation because I am not a guilty man." The judge sentenced Scott's wife, who denied simi-

lar charges, to 15 months in prison.

The judge said: "I accept that it is your view that the law is wrong. But those who live in society must accept its laws. You were the author of a sophisticated and calculated plan to produce the best quality cannabis."

Scott, who defended himself, asked the judge to do a "truly courageous, truly honourable" act and order a retrial. The judge replied that

he did not have that power.

Detectives who worked on the case described Scott as one of the most arrogant men they had ever come across.

Detective Inspector Barry Sobey said: "This has been a substantial success for us in the war against drugs. This was a very professional operation which produced extremely high quality cannabis. We have smashed a major producer in the home grown drugs industry."

Women stripped house of contents

By PAUL WILKINSON

NEIGHBOURS on a notorious council estate thought it was open house when one tenant moved out temporarily from her three-bedroom semi. Within days it had been stripped of everything that could be carried away.

Out went a two-piece suite, tables and chairs, the television and other electrical equipment. Even the cooker and a karaoke machine were disconnected and removed. When the occupant returned to collect her belongings she found the house bare.

So far police have arrested and charged 19 adults and juveniles, mostly women. All are from the Kendray estate in Barnsley, known locally as the Bronx. Two of those arrested appeared before Barnsley magistrates on Wednesday. Colleen Oliver, 24, and Lisa Hampshire, 23, were the first to be dealt with. Oliver admitted handling the stolen suite and a karaoke machine worth £820. Hampshire admitted handling a stolen fridge and telephone. Stuart Newton, for the prosecution, said the house had become empty after the tenant had a row with a neighbour and walked out. Council workmen sealed the doors and boarded up the windows, but the house was still broken into repeatedly. When it was checked four days later all the contents had been stolen.

Jack Danaher, for both defendants, said: "After the house was boarded up the locals just started going in and out. It was open house."

CORRECTION

Because of an editing error the final sentence of a letter from Mrs Gillian Bardinet (December 12) was incorrect. It should have read: "It may no longer be unrealistic to see the advent of a European currency as a natural corollary of European stability and prosperity, based on the best elements of the British example."

McLibel judgment may take a while, says the prisoner of Court 35

By BILL FROST

BRITAIN'S longest libel trial, in which two penniless environmentalists claimed that the burger chain McDonald's was poisoning customers, exploiting Third World countries and employing cheap labour, finally ended yesterday.

In the summer of 1994, Mr Justice Bell began presiding in the High Court over what appeared to be a straightforward libel case, expected to last a few months. Yesterday the case was handed over to him to

consider after two-and-a-half years in Court 35. He had listened to more than a hundred witnesses and studied 40,000 documents and 20,000 pages of transcripts generated during the 313 days of the hearing, in which Dave Morris and Helen Steel denied libelling McDonald's.

In Court 35 yesterday, before the judge rose, he said, to laughter: "I will say now that I propose to reserve my judgment. It will take me some time to write it. I don't mean to be difficult when I say I

don't know when I will deliver it because I don't know." It would take longer than the few weeks mentioned in newspaper reports, he said.

Mr Morris and Ms Steel, who represented themselves in the so-called McLibel Trial, had prepared evidence about the destruction of the rainforests and exploitation of Third World farmers, and had appealed for information on the company's ethics and practices. The pair slumped back on the court benches yesterday and smiled rue-

fully as the judge left the courtroom. They denied that they would miss their daily court appearance.

McDonald's had been represented by a legal firm led by Richard Rampton, QC, whose fees alone amounted to £2,000 a day. The company's legal fund is £10 million.

Even if the judge finds against Ms Steel, 32, and Mr Morris, 42, it is unlikely to make much difference to the amateur lawyers. The fast-food chain has little chance of recovering legal costs amounting to millions of pounds because their

opponents are not in paid employment. McDonald's has indicated it will not be seeking damages, only to clarify the facts and win an injunction barring the pair from repeating their allegations.

That is exactly how the trial began in 1994, when Mr Rampton asked Mr Justice Bell to end the long-running campaign by the environmentalists. A leaflet written by London Greenpeace, which has nothing to do with Greenpeace International, contained a "wholesale attack on almost every aspect of

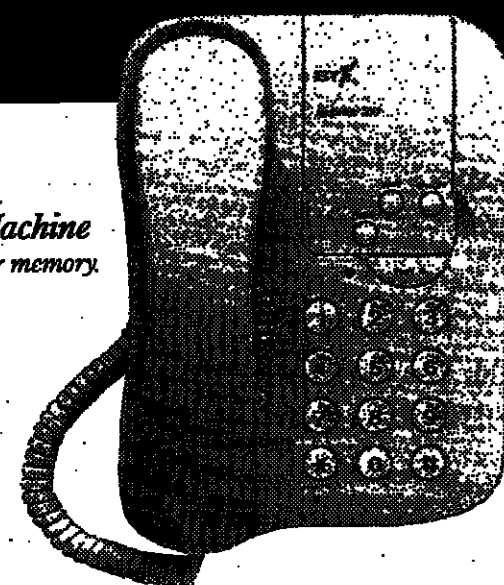
McDonald's business", he told the judge. It was completely false in every respect, but the pair had published material repeating the allegations on the day before the first morning of the trial, he said.

Now the trial is over, the campaign against McDonald's has moved to the Internet. Supporters of Mr Morris and Ms Steel have set up a web site called *McSpotlight*, which contains millions of words from the trial and clips of film. It was accessed 174,000 times in the first week.

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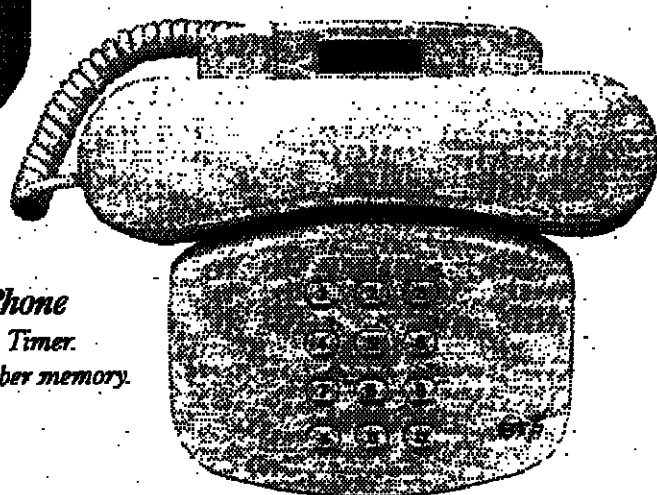
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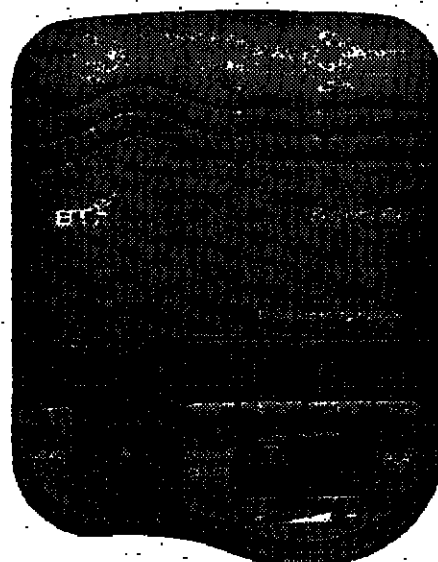
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French go-slow forces ski instructors to miss the snow rush

By OLIVER AUGUST
AND JOANNA BALE

AS THOUSANDS of British skiers set off for the French Alps this weekend to the best snow conditions for years they will be leaving behind a band of frustrated British instructors.

The instructors are casualties in the latest battle between French and British ski schools, which

have fought for years over the right to teach English-speaking skiers.

Despite guarantees by Alain Juppé, the French Prime Minister, that British instructors are free at last of restrictions, the French ski industry appears to have found a new way of keeping them off the slopes. Delays by the authorities in processing teaching permits and in organising obligatory instructor tests mean that many instructors

are stuck at home.

The instructors hope to challenge the French Government in the European Court of Justice, and have the support of Mario Monti, the European Commissioner responsible for free movement of labour. He told the BBC's *E File* programme, to be screened tomorrow, that the Commission was prepared to take the French Government to the European

Court for breaching single market rules about the free movement of labour.

In previous seasons, French ski schools used legal action and threats of violence to protect their teaching monopoly. Now the French Skiing Federation has a backlog of permit applications from British instructors waiting to be cleared. The federation said it had more than 24 applications

from Britain but declined to comment on the number approved. A racing test on a slalom piste, which applicants have to pass before they are allowed to teach, has also been delayed until next year. David Renouf, chairman of the British Association of Ski Instructors, said: "Our top instructors are sitting on their hands in Britain instead of being out there in the snow."

Many European resorts are experiencing the best conditions for years. So much snow fell across the Alps at the beginning of the month that cars, snow cannons and even chalets were hidden. Much of the excess has been cleared, leaving perfect ski conditions. In Alpe d'Huez, a high-level resort at 1800 metres, there is 90cm of snow on the lower slopes and 2.5 metres at the top, while in

Châtel, a low-level resort at 1200 metres, there is 35cm on the lower slopes and 1.9 metres at the top. More snow is forecast for today and Monday. A spokesman for the Ski Club of Great Britain said: "These are exceptionally good conditions for this time of year and illustrate the whole situation across the Alps."

Weather, page 22



Armed policeman guarded the court yesterday

McAliskey is denied bail despite fears for her baby

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

LABOUR peers and historians have joined the growing campaign for Roisin McAliskey — wanted in Germany over an IRA mortar bomb attack on British army barracks last year — to be freed on bail while awaiting extradition proceedings.

Twenty people gathered outside Bow Street Magistrates' Court, central London, amid tight security yesterday as Ms McAliskey, who is about four months pregnant, made an hour-long appearance.

Miss McAliskey, 25, the daughter of former nationalist MP Bernadette Devlin, asked for bail on medical grounds, and produced a doctor's report stating she was in danger of losing her baby.

Garth Peirce, Miss McAliskey's solicitor, told the court that her medical needs had been ignored in Holloway Prison, despite the magistrate's instructions at her pre-



Roisin McAliskey, left. Her mother Bernadette, the former MP, was at yesterday's hearing

vious appearance that she be well cared for. Mrs Peirce also said that offers of sureties totalling £200,000 had been made by prominent figures on both sides of the Irish Sea. Among those offering to stand bail were Lord Stallard — former north London Labour MP and minister Jack Stallard — and writer and historian Peter Beresford Ellis, as well

as Catholic and Protestant neighbours of Miss McAliskey from Co Tyrone. However, Ronald Bartle, stipendiary magistrate at Bow Street, ordered that Miss McAliskey return to prison after being told by John Hardy, appearing for the German Government, that her escape while on bail would be "a feather in the cap of the IRA".

Remanding her in custody until December 20, Mr Bartle said that the doctor's report made "disturbing reading". But he added: "This court has no authority whatever where questions of prison administration are concerned. That said, I commented on the last occasion that Miss McAliskey's condition should be properly provided for. I feel that my public duty demands that I do not alter my previous ruling."

Detective Inspector Andrew Hewitt, of Scotland Yard's organised crime branch, said that the extradition papers were expected to be served by the federal German prosecutor next week.

Later, Miss McAliskey's mother said: "If an emergency arises, how is the State going to compensate my daughter for the reality that, if at the end of the day there is no warrant, no proceedings, no conviction, my child loses her child in that prison?"



Protesters chanted "British justice, no justice"

Playground rowdies face £500 fines

By IAN MURRAY

CHILDREN could be fined up to £500 for singing and shouting too loudly in the playground under a bylaw being considered by a Liberal Democrat council.

The regulations have been drawn up after complaints of noise and vandalism by residents of two estates at Skipton, North Yorkshire. Craven District Council is also considering banning children over 14 from using the playgrounds for riding bicycles or playing ball games. Children could be fined if they ignored a warning to make less noise.

"These playgrounds are designed for use only by little children but there is a history of misuse by teenagers, especially in the evenings," Michael Turnbull, the council solicitor, said. "There are plenty of grassy areas where ball games can be played legally but these playgrounds are not suitable for that kind of thing."

'Unwanted' D'Oyly Carte finds a home

By JOANNA BALE

THE D'Oyly Carte Opera Company is to move to Wolverhampton after settling a sponsorship deal with Tarmac, the construction firm based there.

The industrial giant has agreed to give the opera company support over four years. The borough council has offered offices in a former school.

The D'Oyly Carte has decided to leave Birmingham, where it settled six years ago, after relations turned sour last December when the Labour-led City Council refused to increase the company's £300,000-a-year grants and rent subsidy. The company complained it was "not wanted" in Birmingham and began negotiations with other towns and cities.

Productions will be based at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre but the confusion over the company's future home

means its new season, including performances of *The Gondoliers*, will not be launched until next autumn.

Last night, the D'Oyly Carte's manager, Ray Brown, said the company would be seeking further private sponsorship. Tarmac this week hosted a dinner for the D'Oyly Carte at its headquarters in Wolverhampton which was attended by Mr Brown and the opera company's chairman, Sir Michael Bishop.

The company, which still has offices in Birmingham's John Bright Street, has a turnover of about £2 million in ticket sales and merchandising. A spokesman for Birmingham council said: "It's a shame Tarmac could not have come up with the money in the years the company was here."

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MPs join forces to declare war on knives

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

CURBS on the sale and possession of knives were unanimously backed by MPs yesterday. They include more police powers to search for knives and a ban on advertisements that suggest a knife is suitable for combat or encourage violent behaviour.

A Bill introduced by Jimmy Wray, the Labour member for Glasgow Provan, passed its second reading in the Commons. David Maclean, a Home Office minister, said the Bill would tackle the "menace of knife-related crime. I believe the proposals in this Bill will make a significant contribution in stamping out the unpleasant and unacceptable ways that combat knives are marketed."

The proposals provided "a sensible extension of stop-and-search powers, with three major constraints — it has to happen in a particular locality, be authorised by a senior police officer and limited in time". Mr Maclean said that the Bill would send "a clear signal... that society will not tolerate knife-related crime".

Although ministers have refused to bring forward a Government Bill to outlaw combat knives, citing difficulties in drawing up definitions, the Home Office drafted yesterday's Private Member's Bill. It is expected to become law early next year in response to a year-long campaign against combat knives that began with the murder of Philip Lawrence, the London headmaster. The Bill makes it

an offence to publish any material in connection with marketing a knife which suggests the knife is suitable for combat.

It provides a limited extension of police powers to stop and search for blades and introduces a jail term of up to two years for anyone who markets combat knives.

Mr Wray, referring to the campaign for a ban on combat knives that followed Mr Lawrence's stabbing last December, said: "Let's pass this Bill without delay. That will be a victory for Mrs Lawrence and a victory for common sense. I want young people to be heroes and give up their knives, and stop the senseless murders and stabbings."

"Carrying a knife is not for protection or a sign of strength, but a sign of weakness that comes from people without the courage to take these knives off the street."

Mr Wray said that the names of some knives betrayed their purpose. He highlighted mail-order catalogues advertising "a Terminator terror sword, a monstrous double-handed sword and a commando knife complete with blood channels described as an ideal Christmas present. I, for one, do not wish to see stockings filled this Christmas with such weaponry."

Alun Michael, a Labour Home Affairs spokesman, said: "We have argued for years that the carrying and sale of combat knives must be controlled by law."

Sharp operator will try to outwit the law

By RUSSELL JENKINS

DEALERS are preparing to outwit the Bill on knives by changing the names of their products. Machetes, daggers and blades sold with such epithets as Terminator and The Assassin would be given less dramatic names acceptable under the wording of the new law.

Graham Barton, the managing director of Battle Orders, one of the country's largest mail-order companies offering knives, said that he aimed to stay in business by "tinkering" with the wording of his advertising material.

The company, based at Eastbourne, offers "an extensive selection of military, martial and sporting collectors' knives". Mr Barton said he would change The Predator to The Rigger, and The Viper would become The Linesman's Knife. The Protector Pen and Knife would revert to the Pen and Knife, and Assassin Triple Throwing Knives would lose the word assassin.

The British World War II Commando dagger would be known as the World War II Knife.

The company proposes a statement in its advertisements that would include the words: "There is absolutely no suggestion that any knife offered is suitable for combat as a weapon for inflicting injury on a person or causing personal or fear injury."



Prey: a stuffed Siberian tiger cub in a pharmacy in Taiwan. The demands of traditional Chinese medicine make the slaughter lucrative

Ill-equipped volunteers brave bombs and bullets to save the Siberian tiger

By DANIEL MCGORRY

THE bomb which tore through the Russian businessman's apartment, seriously injuring him and killing his wife and daughter, was a terrible indication of the lengths to which the country's mafia is prepared to go to protect their lucrative slaughter of Siberian tigers.

A price had been put on the businessman's life after he helped undercover agents from the Russian wildlife protection team, Operation Amba, to infiltrate a gang trading in tiger skins and body parts in the Khabarovsk region of the Russian Federation's Far East.

Illicit trade in wildlife worldwide is worth £4 billion a year, more profitable than the illegal arms trade, says Interpol, but few governments spare resources to combat the increasing slaughter, leaving the job to poorly paid and ill-equipped teams like Operation Amba.

Russia's Ministry of the Environment established the squad in January 1994 to combat cross-border poaching from China and the activities of local gangs in the Primorsk territory, home to 85 per cent of the remaining Siberian tiger population of only 150.

Moscow did not have the money to pay its twenty



Predator: but still an endangered species

volunteers, drawn mainly from the military and nature reserve workers, and had to rely on charities like Tusk Force to provide the four reconditioned army trucks that serve both as operational base and mobile home for Operation Amba — meaning "great sovereign", a local word for tiger. The five men in each patrol sleep on narrow wooden benches inside the truck in sub-zero temperatures in the forests of Siberia.

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The manufacturers of traditional Chinese medicine grind the tiger bones to a powder as a cure for ulcers. The genitalia are regarded as an aphrodisiac and the animal's brain is thought to remedy laziness and acne. The trade in skins and body

parts for traditional cures and aphrodisiacs has wiped out three sub-species of tiger this century and reduced the global population from 100,000 to fewer than 5,000.

The mafia collects £40,000 for each tiger while the Amba volunteers' pitied against them are paid less than £200 a month.

Their commander, Vladimir Shetinin, resembles an Old Testament figure with his flowing white beard. In violent language, he explains that he and his rangers are determined to eradicate poaching, no matter the evident personal risk to them and their families.

One of his team, a 50-year-old former Soviet sailor, recently uncovered a smuggling ring dealing in drugs and tiger parts between the city of Arsenyev in Primorsk and Vladivostok. Local police warned the Amba ranger to "leave it alone" but the man refused and days later was ambushed at his home and badly beaten. Amba's efforts have cut poaching within Russia's porous borders by 75 per cent but gun battles are frequent.

Mr Glaster said: "Tigers breed prolifically left to their own devices and Amba's presence has allowed them a chance to replenish their number but the risk from poachers grows ever greater."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Epidemic 'near end' but nurse falls ill

A nurse treating victims of Scotland's *E.coli* 0157 outbreak at Falkirk and District Royal Infirmary has contracted the infection. The news came just hours after Sir David Carter, Scotland's chief medical officer, said the danger of secondary spread had not materialised during the outbreak, which has infected 310 people and killed 11, and predicted that, if there were no new cases, the epidemic could be over by next week.

Tunnel repairs

Workmen have begun to repair the £10,000 damage caused to the Blackwall tunnel by a lorry driver earlier this week. The southbound side of the tunnel will be closed tonight and tomorrow from 9.30pm to 6am.

Boy rapist

A teenager who raped a woman aged 93 in a churchyard was ordered to be detained for 12 years at Chichester Crown Court. Steven Barton was 15 when he attacked the woman near his home in Storrington, West Sussex.

Couple banned

A learner driver and her husband have been banned from driving after they were both convicted of drink-driving by magistrates. Nigel Beal, 25, of Nottingham, had been giving his wife Jennifer, 19, a private driving lesson.

Tote Bill backed

A Bill to allow the Tote's 200 shops to take bets on the Lucky Choice Irish Lottery and other events was given an unopposed second reading. The Horserace Totalisator Board Bill has cross-party support. Racing, pages 40, 41

Mail drop sold

A letter mysteriously dropped over Nova Scotia during the 1919 Transatlantic crossing to New York by the British airship R34 sold to an anonymous buyer at Sotheby's in London for £13,800.

Merle to be sued

Olivier Merle, the French rugby international, is being sued by Ricky Evans for £25,000 for loss of earnings and medical costs over injuries Evans sustained in a match in 1995. He has not played for Wales since.

Fruitful life

Bill Perry, 93, who has worked for 80 years at the preengraver's shop started by his father at Swinton, Greater Manchester, closes it for the last time today after health officials required renovation work.

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3060th, 3072th, 3084th, 3096th, 3108th, 3120th, 3132th, 3144th, 3156th, 3168th, 3180th, 3192th, 3204th, 3216th, 3228th, 3240th, 3252th, 3264th, 3276th, 3288th, 3300th, 3312th, 3324th, 3336th, 3348th, 3360th, 3372th, 3384th, 3396th, 3408th, 3420th, 3432th, 3444th, 3456th, 3468th, 3480th, 3492th, 3504th, 3516th, 3528th, 3540th, 3552th, 3564th, 3576th, 3588th, 3600th, 3612th, 3624th, 3636th, 3648th, 3660th, 3672th, 3684th, 3696th, 3708th, 3720th, 3732th, 3744th, 3756th, 3768th, 3780th, 3792th, 3804th, 3816th, 3828th, 3840th, 3852th, 3864th, 3876th, 3888th, 3900th, 3912th, 3924th, 3936th, 3948th, 3960th, 3972th, 3984th, 3996th, 4008th, 4020th, 4032th, 4044th, 4056th, 4068th, 4080th, 4092th, 4104th, 4116th, 4128th, 4140th, 4152th, 4164th, 4176th, 4188th, 4200th, 4212th, 4224th, 4236th, 4248th, 4260th, 4272th, 4284th, 4296th, 4308th, 4320th, 4332th, 4344th, 4356th, 4368th, 4380th, 4392th, 4404th, 4416th, 4428th, 4440th, 4452th, 4464th, 4476th, 4488th, 4500th, 4512th, 4524th, 4536th, 4548th, 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Falklands fortune sorts the sheep from the sheikhs

THE Falkland Islands face a new danger more insidious, relentless and destabilising than any military threats from Argentina: the discovery of oil.

If the wells to be drilled in any of the offshore tranches licensed in October to more than a dozen multinational oil companies produce commercially exploitable yields, the islands will be rich beyond their dreams. The prospect is already causing arguments and apprehension in the tight-knit community of 2,400 people.

No one knows how much oil revenues will be. However, during the licensing round the Falklands. Government prepared graphs of potential earnings from two hypothetical fields, yielding 250 million and 500 million barrels. The results are staggering: the likely income to the islands if the larger field is found would average £1.1 billion a year over a 20-year period — the equivalent of £453,653 for every man, woman and child in the is-



The prospect of untold riches has divided islanders and put them into conflict with Britain, Michael Binyon writes from Port Stanley

lands. The calculation assumes a royalty of 9 per cent and a company tax of 32.5 per cent, with oil selling at \$18 a barrel. If such fields are found, the revenue would not begin flowing until about 2003, and it would tail off by 2020.

Exploration costs are huge, and the field would have to be at least 100 million barrels before oil companies would invest there. They may find nothing, or only gas, which could not be brought ashore in the present political climate.

Will the simple folk whose forefathers sailed to the isolated and austere archipelago inevitably go the way of the Gulf sheikhs, lazing in luxury while they squander their money with hedonistic aban-

don? Will the wildlife, ecology and tranquillity of the Falklands be for ever ruined by frenetic exploitation and massive spills? And, most worryingly, will neighbour be set against neighbour or the Falkland Islands against the mother country in the ugly scramble for wealth?

Already even the prospect of oil is creating tensions with Britain. The islands' council, the eight-person body that decides all policy except defence and foreign affairs, has formally offered to pay the running costs of Mount Pleasant, the 2,000-strong garrison clustered around the post-1982 military airport, notionally about £67 million a year. The Treasury wants the



The Royal Marines band marches past the Port Stanley monument commemorating the liberation of the Falklands on June 14, 1982

Falkland figure to be fixed before oil is struck and wrangling begins. The islanders refuse. "How can you ask us to name a sum when we don't even know if oil is there?", they

ask. Britain has a swift retort: it is not asking for a cash figure but a sliding percentage depending on what is found.

Both sides recognise growing pressure in Britain.

London has ruled out a direct tax — "shades of the Boston tea party", as Richard Ralph, the Governor, admitted. And the principle has been fixed that dependent territories, as

colonies are now called, are entitled to their natural resources.

However, the Falklanders' argument is weakened by a concession granted, uniquely among overseas possessions, in the wake of the 1982 victory: all are full British citizens with the right of abode. "Imagine the outcry in Britain if a Scottish island suddenly became obscenely rich and refused to share its wealth," an official said.

Oil is also fuelling another argument, raging in Stanley, should the population be increased? Already the economy has been overheated by the £20 million annual income from fishing licences.

Grandiose new projects are mooted daily, but the labour shortage is acute and already the Government has more money than it can spend. Surfacing new roads is impossible without imported expertise. Every Falklander holds two or three jobs and improvisation has reached its limits.

Even if oil pumping and storage is kept offshore, the Falklands will see a huge inflow of visitors and contract labour.

Andrew Gurr, the islands' Chief Executive, and the Falkland Islands Development Corporation, want the industry concentrated in a purpose-built new town, probably in the north where British forces

landed at San Carlos, to avoid swamping Stanley.

Oil-related development could double or triple the population. There is plenty of room, as the islands are bigger than Wales. Outside experts and sociological studies, now being commissioned on what must be the world's most intensively scrutinised society, all point to the essential need to bring in more people.

Most Falklanders will have none of it, however. "Even another 50 families would change our society," they say. Many regret the passing of the quieter, pre-1982 days, and are fatigued by the many changes since. Always slow to accept newcomers, they are now suspicious that would-be immigrants are trying to cash in on a future boom, and have lengthened to seven years the residency required to become a Falklander.

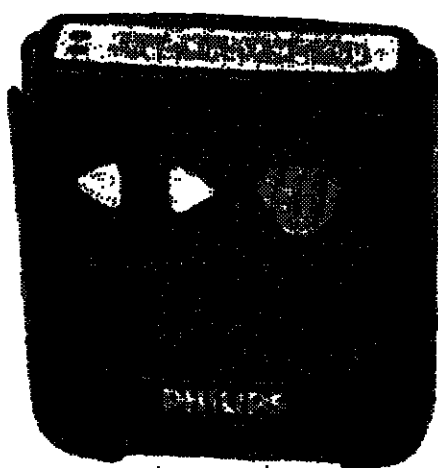
They see a real danger in importing cheap foreign labour, probably from Chile, on the Gulf pattern. A new Immigration Bill will be the most controversial issue the council must tackle before next October's elections.

The final irony of oil wealth is that it will exaggerate the disparity between Stanley and the rest of the islands. Rural population is shrinking, as wool prices slump, and now only 400 people live scattered in the islands.

A new study speaks of the moral need to populate the islands, if only to make a point to Argentina. The temptation to give up and join the Stanley oil boom is enormous. Some suggest cash handouts to struggling farmers. For others, that would be the end of the Falkland spirit: transformed to a Gulf-style economy or, in the phrase that sticks in islanders' gullets, the new Kuwait.

Leading article, page 19

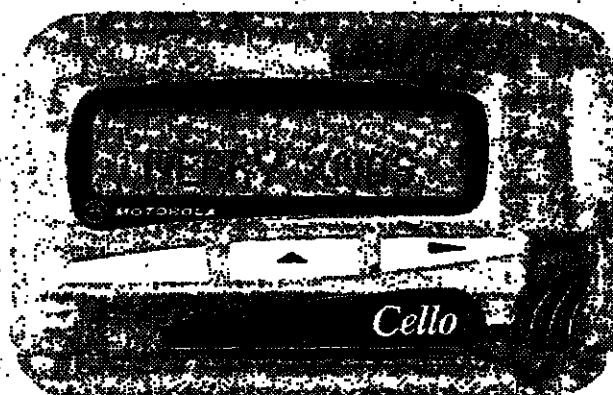
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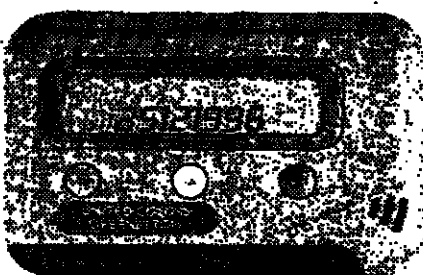
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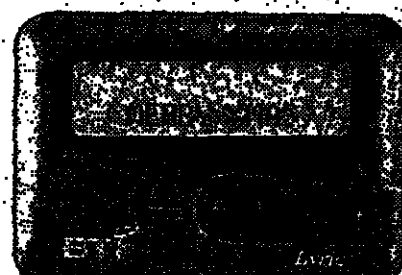
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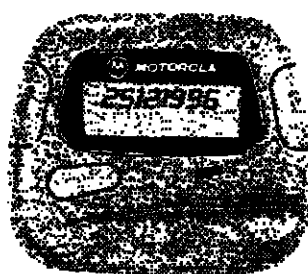
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Annan to head UN as France caves in

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

KOFI ANNAN, the head of United Nations peacekeeping, won unanimous support as the organization's new Secretary-General yesterday after America prevailed in an ugly dispute with France.

Mr Annan, an affable Ghanaian, won consensus in the 15-nation Security Council after France relented on its threat to veto him. The decision will be ratified next week by the UN General Assembly.

The choice of a new UN chief became a struggle for influence between the English-speaking and francophone worlds. Mr Annan's appointment for a five-year term is a diplomatic victory for the United States, which had cast its veto to block the re-election of Boutros Boutros Ghali, an Egyptian educated in France.

France, Dr Boutros Ghali's staunchest supporter, had voted against the American-educated Mr Annan in the first five rounds of straw-polling and supported three rival candidates from French-speaking African countries, all of them educated in France. The francophone candidates were all eliminated, however, when Britain joined America in

casting a double veto against them in a move that France considered a "slap in the face".

British officials were overjoyed that the next Secretary-General would come from an English-speaking African country, giving Britain the opportunity to seek the same privileged access at the UN that France enjoyed under Dr Boutros Ghali. Sir John Weston, the British Ambassador at the UN, raced out of the closed Security Council meeting to be the first diplomat to announce the decision to the waiting television cameras.

France lifted its veto threat against Mr Annan when it became clear that he enjoyed broad support, particularly in Africa. In truth, France had no real objections to him personally, since he worked closely with Paris during the Bosnia operation and speaks adequate French. As he tried to show off his language skills in recent days, diplomats joked that he had even begun speaking English with a French accent.

Mr Annan, 58, joined the World Health Organisation as a lowly administrative officer in 1962 and will be the first UN official to rise through the ranks to take the

world's top diplomatic post. He can be expected to run the organisation as a technocrat and to have a lower profile than his predecessor.

Holding a management degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Mr Annan has served in a variety of UN financial posts before moving to the peacekeeping department. He was promoted to the top job in peacekeeping when the United States wanted to hand over its peacekeeping mission in Somalia to UN command.

Although he ran the troubled UN peacekeeping missions in Somalia and Bosnia, Mr Annan avoided the harsh criticism levelled at Dr Boutros Ghali for the mishaps in both places. Colleagues often comment that he has non-stick Teflon qualities.

Mr Annan is married with three children to the niece of Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat who saved thousands of Jews from the Nazis in the Second World War before being imprisoned by the Soviet Union.

His selection raised hopes at UN headquarters that the United States could be persuaded to pay its more than \$1 billion in arrears.



Kofi Annan of Ghana, whose nomination won unanimous support

Warnings heeded as Clinton keeps on his law chief

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

ANNOUNCING a series of appointments to his second-term Administration yesterday, President Clinton grudgingly allowed Janet Reno, the Attorney-General who has led investigations into White House scandals, to remain in his Cabinet.

William Daley, 48, a Democratic Party activist and brother of the Mayor of Chicago, was named as Commerce Secretary, replacing Mickey Kantor, who is leaving. Bill Richardson, 49, a New Mexico congressman, is to be US Ambassador to the United Nations. Madeleine Albright, the previous Ambassador, was earlier appointed Secretary of State.

As part of Mr Clinton's new economic team, Gene Sperling, a senior presidential aide, is to head the National Economic Council created by Mr Clinton to formulate fiscal policy. Robert Rubin remains Treasury Secretary and Frank Raines Budget Director.

Charlene Barshefsky, the acting US Trade Representative, was formally appointed

to the job, and Dan Glickman, the Agriculture Secretary, and Bruce Babbitt, the Interior Secretary, will remain in place.

The President's choices produced little excitement in Washington and gave no signal of a policy change. Mr Richardson, who has made a name for himself as a free-lance troubleshooter negotiating with less democratic regimes around the world, was chosen in part for his Hispanic roots, which the White House hopes will assuage powerful Latin groups concerned about being shut out of the new Cabinet.

The focus yesterday, however, was on Ms Reno. Mr Clinton waited more than five weeks after his re-election to guarantee her continuation as Attorney-General. Republicans had made it known that any attempt by the President to replace the woman who had sought four independent counsel investigations into his Administration would result in further widespread inquiries into the White House.

Disney eases pain of executive exit with \$90m payoff

FROM GILES WHITTELL IN LOS ANGELES

SPRINGING Hollywood mogul Michael Ovitz has eased the humiliation of his parting from the Disney Company with a \$90 million (\$56 million) severance package.

Mr Ovitz's abrupt departure from the world's second-largest entertainment giant on Thursday ends months of damaging rumours of a titanic clash of egos in the boardroom.

The deal was negotiated in secret in a four-hour midnight meeting between Mr Ovitz and the man he hoped to succeed as Disney's chairman, it emerged yesterday.

Michael Eisner, who has turned the company into a global powerhouse with an annual turnover of \$21 billion, invited Mr Ovitz to his New York apartment on Wednesday night as speculation about a rift mounted. By 2.30am on Thursday, the pair had agreed on an announcement that Mr Ovitz would leave "by mutual agreement".

His \$90 million severance, made up of \$50 million in cash and \$40 million of Disney stock, follows a year of intrigue and extravagance but not one notable achievement by a figure once regarded as Hollywood's most powerful man. Hired as the company's

second-in-command in the wake of a heart bypass operation on Mr Eisner, Mr Ovitz left a renowned talent agency he had built from scratch, the Creative Artists' Agency. At Disney headquarters in Burbank, the reputation he had built up was quickly destroyed.

"He struggled with just what he was supposed to do," Stephen Bollenbach, the former Disney chief financial officer, told *Vanity Fair* in an especially wounding article last month.

Instead of relieving Mr Eisner of some of the burden of running Disney and its huge new acquisition, the ABC television network, Mr Ovitz appears to have upset his boss and family friend from the start by hiring seven secretaries and having drivers always on call.

Most recently the company's move to expand into China, spearheaded by Mr Ovitz, ran into trouble over a film about the Dalai Lama being made by Martin Scorsese.

A Disney executive said yesterday that in the final weeks Mr Ovitz "was like a crazy uncle at a family reunion. Nobody would talk to him."

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Jaruzelski says martial law kept Russians out

GENERAL Wojciech Jaruzelski, the former Polish Communist leader, emerged from the shadows yesterday to defend his role in declaring martial law 15 years ago.

In an interview to mark the anniversary, the general argued that he cracked down on his own country to fend off a Soviet-led invasion.

"I am still deeply convinced this decision was correct, given the internal and especially external realities of the time," said the general, who lives in a modest villa on Warsaw's Ikarus Street.

Despite the grim memories of soldiers crouched around braziers and secret police harassment, Poles are beginning to agree with his version. An opinion poll conducted by the CBOS institute shows that 54 per cent of Poles now consider martial law to have been a correct decision, while 30 per cent say it was wrong.

Yet Polish historians trawling through Soviet, Polish, and East German Politburo minutes can find no convincing evidence that the Russians were preparing to invade Poland. Would Moscow have risked a major war by marching into the territory of its neighbour and ally, they ask.

Piotr Kosikow, responsible for the Polish papers in the Soviet Central Committee archives, has searched for convincing evidence and come up empty-handed. "If a military invasion of Poland was ever discussed in Moscow, then that should show up in our files. But as far as I can judge,



The majority of Poles seem to be coming round to the view of General Jaruzelski, left, that his military clampdown headed off a Soviet invasion. Roger Boyes writes from Bonn

there is not a single official or authorised document to that effect," he said.

The recently published memoirs of Vitali Pavlov, the KGB chief in Warsaw, also strongly denies that Russia was interested in invading. In late October 1980, as the Russians saw that the Solidarity movement was set to become a lasting feature of Polish politics, there were some mumbled threats.

At a Politburo session on October 29, 1980, Dmitri Ustinov, the Defence Minister, went furthest, declaring: "Our Northern Group is on alert and is in a state of full combat readiness."

Jerzy Holzer, a Polish historian, says he has been unable to gain access to Soviet minutes between October and December 1980. According to the memoirs of General Jaruzelski and Stanislaw Kania, the then party chief, those were the months when pressure began to mount on the Warsaw regime.

There is confirmation of this in the diary of Zbigniew Brzezinski, the US National Security Adviser, who talks of Soviet troops massing on the borders, and from Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski, the Polish staff officer who was spying for the Americans.

Yet the indications are that this invasion scare was part of a Soviet bluff to put pressure on the Polish leaders and to encourage the West to withdraw its support for Solidarity. By January 22, 1981, this is already apparent when Mr Ustinov told the Politburo: "We have to exert continuous pressure on the Polish leadership. In March we will have manoeuvres, which we should, in my opinion, make rather intense to give the impression that we have troops ready to go."

Every available declassified Politburo minute follows a similar line: the point seems to have been to push the Polish regime to launch its own crackdown.

The most intriguing effect of this pressure was to drive General Jaruzelski close to nervous breakdown. Yuri Andropov, the Soviet leader, noted after meeting the general: "Comrade Jaruzelski repeated his request to be relieved of the post of Prime Minister. We made it plain, in a friendly way, that he should carry on."

The 73-year-old general yesterday claimed that martial law helped indirectly to bring about a peaceful handover of power later in the decade. It was arguably one of the most important steps in the collapse of Communist authority in Eastern Europe.

But Russian and Polish archives show General Jaruzelski was far from being a hero and, despite his emphasis on patriotic credentials, he was beholden to the Kremlin.

"I won't pass judgment on him, let history do that," said Lech Walesa, the former Polish President, after paying tribute to martial law victims.

For the time being the shameful arithmetic of the military take-over will have to suffice: more than 13,000 Poles were interned without trial, two dozen died in clashes between striking workers and riot police, a dozen political murders are still unsolved, and 750,000 Poles emigrated.

On top of that are the many fractured lives: those Poles who were thrown out of schools and universities, who lost their professions, had their children taken away and who lost a decade.

Belgians seek child sex victims at mine

FROM LEVIA LINTON IN BRUSSELS

ABOUT 50 police and investigators in the Brussels paedophile murder case yesterday began digging in two places near an abandoned mineshaft in the Jumez suburb of Charleroi.

Police blocked off surrounding roads and brought in dogs as they searched for an entrance to a tunnel which they believe Marc Dutroux, the main suspect in the abduction and murder of four young girls, could have used to hide further kidnap victims or as a cache.

They did not rule out the discovery of more bodies and the families of children reported missing in recent years were being kept informed.

Marcel Guissart, a spokesman for the investigators, said that they were following serious clues and were confident of finding a tunnel entrance. It is the second time that police officers have dug in that area.

In September, they excavated around the mineshaft where M Dutroux told them they would find "something interesting there". Twice in the past when he used that expression, girls' bodies were found, but on that occasion police found nothing of significance.

Police yesterday also searched cellars in four houses nearby to see if they contained hidden entrances connected to the mine.



Velázquez's portrait of Pope Innocent X, back on view in a privately owned palace

Rebirth of a private museum highlights Italy's state of art

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

ONE OF Europe's most spectacular private art collections, owned by an Anglo-Italian dynasty and housed in a vast Renaissance palace, reopens tomorrow after only a year of restoration — a remarkable record by Italian standards.

The press this week hailed the revival of the Doria Pamphilj collection and the opening up of richly decorated salons hitherto closed to the public as proof of the vitality of Italy's handful of private museums, compared with the country's 3,500 chronically over-staffed and under-resourced state museums.

Jonathan Doria Pamphilj, 33, heir to the title and a moving force behind the revival, was born in London and spent four years in Sotheby's Old Masters department. He said that keeping the huge palace in central Rome open to the public had been a "moral obligation" and for many years they had run it at a loss. "We couldn't go on like that," he said as he watched the museum's prize exhibit — Velázquez's portrait of Pope Innocent X, born Giambattista Pamphilj in 1574 — being unpacked from its crate and rehung. "Rather than closing

it down, we decided to run it as a business."

Exhibition space has been doubled and the Doria Pamphilj have produced a CD-Rom of the 600-strong collection of paintings. They will rent out the salons, hung with Gobelin tapestries, for dinner parties and concerts.

The rapid restoration — and the dedication of a staff of only six — are being contrasted with the plight of the dilapidated state-run Villa Borghese gallery, which closed 13 years ago when the ceiling collapsed; most of it has still not reopened.

Many of Italy's public collections are closed or open only intermittently. "Il Messaggero" said the Doria Pamphilj collection, run by Jonathan with his sister, Ghesine, and her Italian husband, Massimiliano Floridi, has a vibrancy which the state collections often lack.

Velázquez's portrait of an irritable Innocent X is being displayed with Bernini's kinder bust. During the gallery's closure both travelled — along with other masterpieces such as Titian's *Salome* (also known as *Judith*) and Caravaggio's *Rest on the Flight into Egypt* — to London and other world capitals on loan.

The Culture Ministry has contributed £400,000 to restoration costs. But the postwar view that art "belongs to the people" remains strong. State mistrust — and penalisation — of private collectors dates back to the Grand Tour, when the papal authorities became alarmed at the number of works of art disappearing in aristocratic baggage. A papal bull restricting private collections is still in force.

Innocent X decreed the collection should "never be divided up", and a succession of British family members has helped to keep it intact. In the 1830s, when Stendhal was listing it as one of the wonders of Rome, Mary Talbot, Countess of Shrewsbury, married Prince Filippo Andrea Ioria Pamphilj. The current patriarch, Princess Orietta, married an English naval officer, Lt Commander Frank Posson, in the 1960s. To the delight of the Italians, he adopted the Doria Pamphilj name.

The family hopes the 3,000 visitors to the gallery in 1995 will rise to a "break-even" point of 50,000 visitors by 2000. But Jonathan Doria Pamphilj said the position of private museums remains "precarious".

New Nato force to take over in Bosnia

BY MICHAEL EVANS DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

THE United Nations Security Council has agreed to a mandate for a new Nato-led military force for Bosnia-Herzegovina for the next 18 months. The troops will be authorised to take robust action to defend themselves against the threat of attack.

The mandate coincided with an announcement by the United States that it has completed the delivery of new weapons for the Muslim-Croat Federation, which has transformed the previous imbalance of forces between the federation and the Bosnian Serbs. But the arrival of tanks, artillery and armoured personnel carriers has been matched by a stubborn refusal by the Serbs to reduce their heavy weapons stocks, as agreed under the Dayton accord signed in 1995.

The new 31,000-strong Stabilisation Force (Sfor) will be given its "action order" by Nato defence ministers in Brussels on Tuesday. The force will include about 5,000 British troops.

The mission will start officially on December 20, replacing the 60,000-strong, Nato-led Implementation Force (Ifor). The new force is to include an offshore unit of about 5,000 US Marines who can be drafted into Bosnia in the event of an emergency.

The mandate came just in time for the German Government to secure a huge 499-93 majority in parliament yesterday to send about 3,000 troops to join Sfor.



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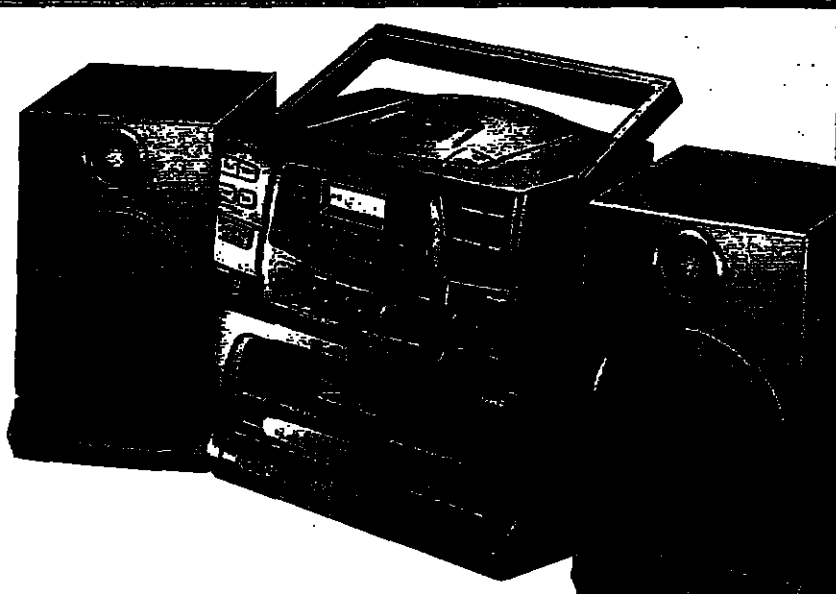
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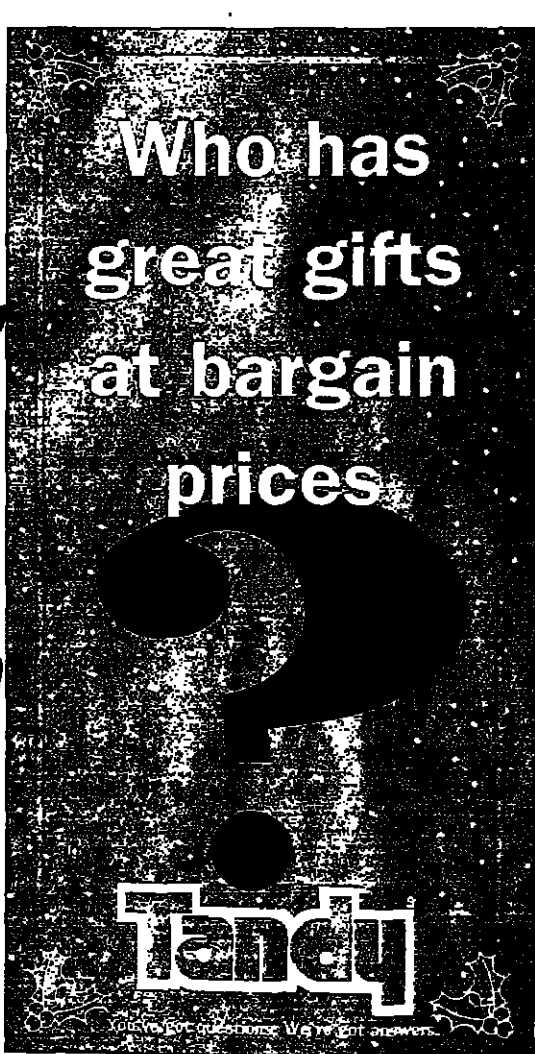
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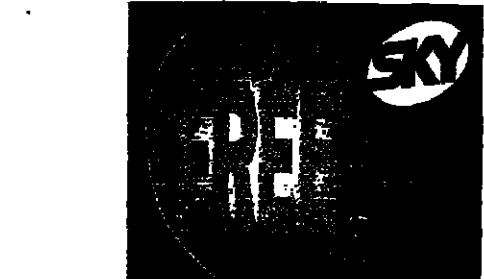
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Rwandans return to camps

Benaco Camp, Tanzania: An estimated 300,000 Rwandan refugees trekked back towards their camps near Tanzania's border with Rwanda yesterday after troops stopped them fleeing into the bush.

Thousands of refugees broke through a cordon of stick-wielding troops to get back to the camp. Soldiers beat some but gave up trying to stop the flow. A new attempt to repatriate refugees is expected to be made today. (Reuters)

Reward offer for hostages

Delhi: The Kashmir state government is offering a reward of 1 million rupees (£17,200) for information about four foreigners taken hostage last year. (Christopher Thomas writes). Photographs of the men, including Keith Mangan and Paul Wells from Britain, are being distributed.

Belgian MPs end nightmare

Brussels: The Belgian parliament voted yesterday to exonerate Elio Di Rupo, a Deputy Prime Minister, of allegations of paedophilia (Leyla Linton writes). Mr Di Rupo, a Socialist and homosexual, said the vote ended a four-week nightmare.

Doubts over kidnap victim

Phnom Penh: Cambodia said it had received no fresh information on the fate of the kidnapped Briton Christopher Howes for more than three weeks and was no longer certain the mine-clearance expert was alive. (Reuters)

H-bomb claim gets backing

Wellington: The Government has agreed to finance a class action lawsuit against it by New Zealand navy veterans who claim they suffered high cancer rates from British H-bomb tests in 1957 and 1958. (AP)

Life guards

San Francisco: Patrols hired to stop suicide leaps from the Golden Gate Bridge may have saved the lives of 24 people during the scheme's first eight months. (AP)

Cash boosts for settlers deepen fear of violence

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

THE Palestinian Authority last night accused the right-wing Government of Benjamin Netanyahu of "a declaration of war" for approving a multimillion-pound scheme to boost Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank, land captured from the Arabs in 1967.

Under the scheme announced by the Cabinet in defiant response to Wednesday's murder of two Jewish settlers by Palestinian extremists, the settlements on land referred to by Mr Netanyahu as "Judea and Samaria" will revert to the status of a "national priority zone" they enjoyed before the 1993 peace treaty with the Palestinians.

In practical terms, the costly new scheme of tax and mortgage allowances for residents and generous investment grants for new businesses are

expected to encourage thousands more Israelis to live in the West Bank.

The repeal of the special status by the assassinated Labour Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, was seen as an essential part of his policy of making peace with Yasser Arafat, leader of the Palestinian Authority. Its reinstatement was followed by a pledge from the militant Islamic group Hamas to resume its campaign of suicide bombings and an appeal from the radical exiled Palestinian leader, Georges Habash, for a new intifada.

The heightened tension, which many observers fear may soon spill over into new violence, was reflected in the response from Mr Arafat's Information Ministry. "This decision is a direct call for violence and a declaration of



A road purpose-built for Israelis wanting to avoid Palestinian areas when travelling to settlements north of Jerusalem

war on the Palestinian people and its National Authority," the ministry said. "It threatens to undermine what remains of the peace process."

Leaders of the 130,000 West Bank settlers welcomed the response to the murder on Wednesday of Eyal Tzur and her 12-year-old son, Ephraim, but complained that it did not go far enough. "It is a Zionist

answer, but not enough of a Zionist answer," said the settlers' spokesman, Ahron Dornb, who repeated an earlier demand for the construction of new settlements.

The Government's move was bitterly criticised by members of the opposition Labour Party, who claimed that the clock was rapidly being turned back to the pre-peace

era. "Peace and security will not be achieved by making this area [of the West Bank] a 'national priority region'. It is simply a joke," said Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, former Housing Minister and war hero. "Talking about building new settlements and thousands of housing units is tantamount to ending the Oslo [peace] process."

In a revival of mass public support for Hamas, a militant crowd of 25,000 gathered in the Gaza Strip to mark the first anniversary of Israel's assassination of bomb-maker Yehia Ayash, known as "The Engineer". In Israel a maximum security alert was declared after intelligence warnings of a suicide car bomb.

Hundreds arrested in hunt for Uday's 'cowardly' attackers

FROM MICHAEL THEODOULOU IN NICOSIA

HUNDREDS of Iraqis, including 200 members of an elite Republican Guard unit based near the Baghdad presidential palace, were said to have been arrested after the assassination attempt on the life of Uday, President Saddam Hussein's brutal son.

Reports said Saddam unleashed

his security forces yesterday to hunt down the "treacherous cowards" who ambushed Uday, regarded as his heir apparent, on Thursday night in a Baghdad suburb.

Wafiq Samarra, a former Iraqi intelligence chief who defected to Syria in 1994, said 500 people had been arrested overnight. "Based on my information, several armed men opened fire on Uday at the same time

as he was driving in the wealthy al-Mansur neighbourhood."

It was not clear whether the attempt on the life of Uday, a self-confessed killer, was an act of personal revenge or politically motivated. He had many enemies, from rivals in the ruling Takriti clan to powerful businessmen and families of women he had allegedly raped.

But any attack on Uday is a strike

at Saddam's regime, envoys said. "It's a double blow to Saddam: first, because it took place in Baghdad where his grip on power is supposed to be undisputed; and second, because it was against the son he was apparently grooming for succession," a diplomat in Jordan said.

Iraq's state-controlled media insisted yesterday that Uday was only slightly hurt. But the unprecedented

step by the media of announcing the incident led to speculation that his condition may be far more serious or that he may even be dead.

An Iraqi exile said: "If they really wanted to show he was all right, why haven't we seen pictures of him smiling in hospital?" One witness said Uday was dragged unconscious from his bullet-riddled car with blood pouring from his head.

Tehran 'plotted to kill Rushdie in Denmark'

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

AMERICAN officials are claiming that Iran made active preparations to attack Salman Rushdie when the British author received a prestigious literary award from the European Union in Copenhagen last month.

The Danish Government, under intense pressure at home and abroad, finally apologised and allowed Mr Rushdie to accept the award for his latest book, *The Moor's Last Sigh*. A fatwa, ordering his death, was passed on Mr Rushdie by the late Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989 for allegedly defaming the Prophet Muhammad.

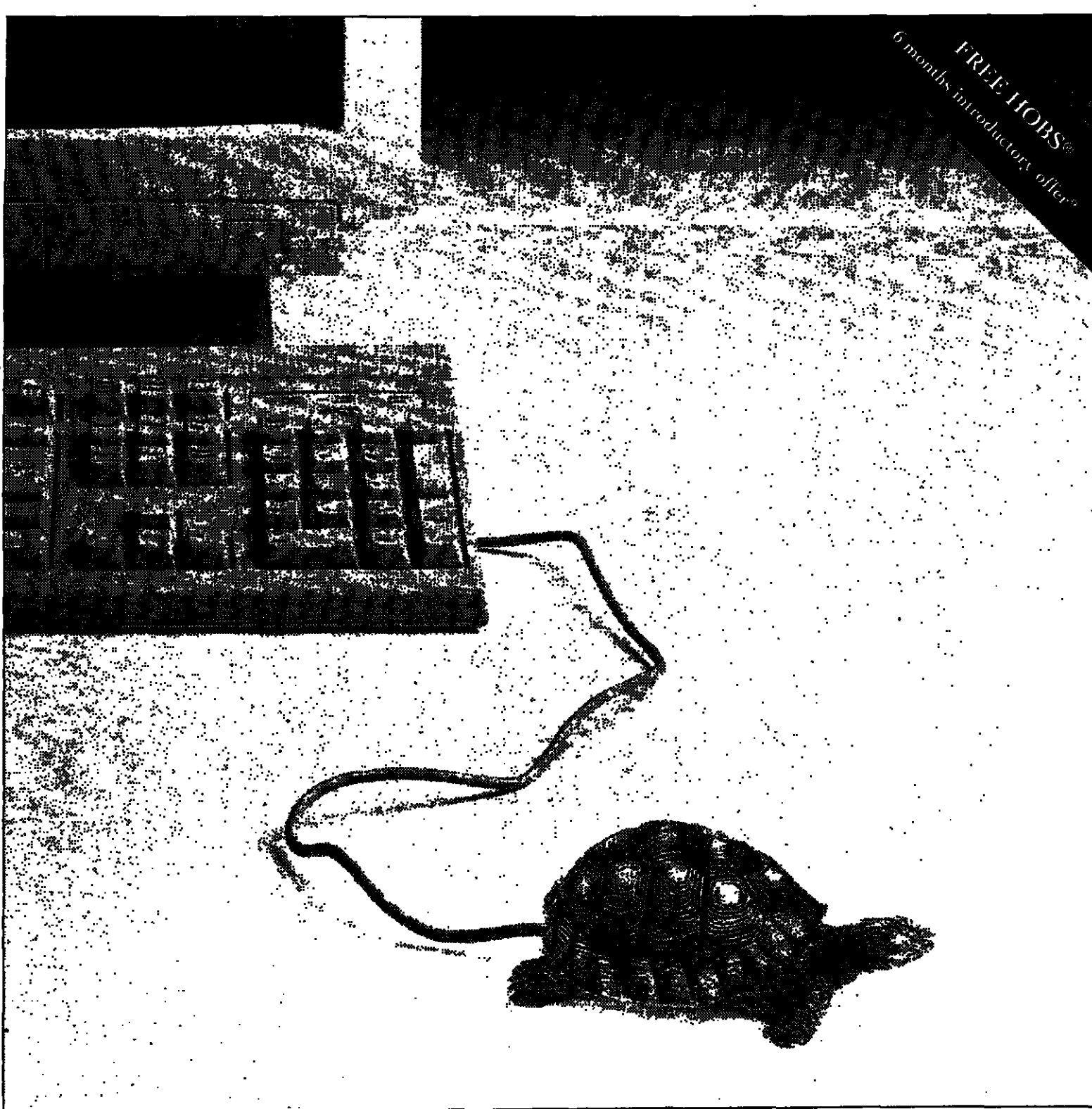
Revelations about the Denmark plot, reported in the *Los Angeles Times* yesterday, formed part of the latest batch of US intelligence on Tehran.

Iran is said to be flying at least three Boeing 747 cargo jets, with weapons and humanitarian supplies, to Syria every month for shipment to Hezbollah, the radical Islamic group in Lebanon.

The escalation in arms shipments said to have begun during the spring offensive by the Israeli Army, when 150 mostly civilian Lebanese were killed.

Hossein Nosrat, an Iranian official at the United Nations, denied the allegations of Tehran's involvement in arms shipments and any plot to kill Mr Rushdie.

"The Iranian Government is not going to send anybody or any group to kill anybody in other parts of the world," he said. "That includes Salman Rushdie."



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Allegations of corruption cast a shadow over mayoral family in the City of Lights

Relatives devalued

FRENCH politicians make a point of enjoying activities with all the family: the Chiracs like to eat the Juppés like to shop; and the family of Jean Tiberi, the Mayor of Paris, spends much of its spare time swimming against a rising tide of ugly corruption allegations.

In the 18 months he has presided over the Hôtel de Ville, first M Tiberi, then his wife and finally his son have each become the target of legal investigation, the cumulative effect of which has turned the family into a running joke and a serious political liability for the ruling Gaullist party.

When he succeeded Jacques Chirac as Mayor of Paris last year, M Tiberi was billed as a party stalwart, a reliable career politician unlikely to make waves. Then the sleaze allegations started

PARIS FILE
by BEN
MACINTYRE



rolling in. First it was claimed that as deputy mayor and head of the capital's housing office, M Tiberi had allocated a city-owned flat to his son, Dominique, and then ordered lavish renovations at a cost of more than £200,000 to taxpayers. M Tiberi's formidable wife Xavière, it was reported, had personally overseen the installation of marble flooring throughout the five-room apartment for which Dominique Tiberi paid a rent of just £800 a month, approximately a third of the going rate.

To boot, the former deputy director of the housing office told Eric Halphen, an investigative magistrate, that "for years" a system of fraudulent housing deals had operated

in which secret payments were made to the Gaullist RPR party. Judge Halphen raided the Mayor's Paris home and found documents that cast Tiberi family values in an even more dubious light.

It appeared that Mme Tiberi had been paid £25,000 by a regional authority for writing a short advisory report that was full of mistakes and at least partly plagiarised. The fee worked out at £700 a page.

Last week Mme Tiberi and Xavier Dugoin, the Gaullist head of the regional authority which "employed" her, were both placed under formal legal investigation for misuse of public funds.

While his mother was preparing to face charges, Dominique Tiberi, the deputy chief of staff to Roger Romani, the Minister for Parliamentary Relations, was being grilled by judicial police amid claims that he had continued to receive a salary from the state-owned airline, Air France, long after he stopped working for the company.

M Tiberi's strongly denied he had been paid a double salary and, according to *Le Monde*, last June the Prime Minister's office "very discreetly" repaid more than Fr1.1 million (£150,000) to Air



Jean Tiberi and his wife, Xavière, both the target of legal investigations about corruption, are rapidly becoming a liability for the ruling Gaullist party

France for his wages and social security benefits. Dominique Tiberi moved out of his council flat last year, and in July the "conflict of interest" allegations against his father over its allocation were abruptly shelved by the Paris prosecutor.

But the Mayor is not yet out of the woods. Earlier this

week, M Dugoin alleged that he had personally negotiated his wife's exorbitant fee for the advisory brief.

All week French newspapers have been speculating on whether the Mayor will now be placed under investigation himself or forced to resign. "I've never seen one man unleash such a quantity

of ink," Michel Bulté, a mayoral aide, said. The Xavière Tiberi case suggests the Gaullist authorities are desperate to put a lid on further corruption investigations. Prosecutors say the inquiries could open a Pandora's box of illegal funding during President Chirac's time as Mayor of Paris.

America's cultural wasteland

PARIS has an apt monument to the current state of Franco-US relations: it is the vast American Culture Centre in the 12th arrondissement which is deserted, unwanted and now falling apart.

As the row continued yesterday over whether the French Foreign Minister, Hervé de Charette, had snubbed the outgoing US Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, at a Nato function this week, it was reported that the centre, originally intended to disseminate American culture to the French masses, still cannot find a buyer. The building, designed by architect Frank Gehry, was closed more than a year ago with huge debts.

France, it seems, does not want American culture any more than it wants Kofi Annan, the American-backed candidate for UN Secretary-General. At loggerheads with the US over Nato reform and diplomacy in Africa and the Middle East, M de Charette has lost few opportunities to needle his US counterpart.

As a parting gift, or shot, he presented the non-French speaking Mr Christopher with five French novels.

Paris, we can safely assume, will be quite happy to see the cultural centre stand empty until it falls apart completely.



Lebed: shift of tactics from lightning strike

Lebed to prolong siege of Kremlin

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

LIKE a military commander who has snatched his tactics halfway through a battle, General Aleksandr Lebed has dropped his lightning attack for control of the Kremlin and opted for a prolonged siege.

It is two months since the charismatic former paratrooper was sacked by President Yeltsin as Russia's security chief. He started the nation when he came third in June's presidential elections and then accepted a job as National Security Adviser. Since being dismissed for "insubordination", General Lebed has been working behind the scenes, building up support abroad with trips to America and Europe and laying the foundations for a political movement to be launched later this month.

"When it looked like Yeltsin was not going to survive his term and a succession battle was looming, Lebed was leading an open campaign for the presidency," one diplomat said. "Now that Yeltsin seems to have recovered from his heart surgery, Lebed has obviously decided on a longer-term strategy."

Thomas Pickering, who recently retired as US Ambassador to Moscow, said on Wednesday that Russians would tire of General Lebed's tactics. He predicted that the former paratrooper would suffer the same fate as Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, the ultra-nationalist whose support has crumbled over the past three years.

Others, including senior figures in the Kremlin, are convinced that the Afghan War veteran's political career is far from over. Apart from his dominant place in the opinion polls, where he enjoys double the popularity of his nearest rivals, many draw parallels with President Yeltsin's rise to power and his long period of isolation in the final years of Soviet rule.

One man who has not written off General Lebed's chances is Mikhail Gorbachev, the former Soviet leader, who this week, flattered with the idea of backing him,

Wrongs of Bernadette

BERNADETTE GOEURY, a housemaid who recently won £4.5 million in the French lottery, is about to set off on a concert tour during which she will musically lambast her late mother, Mme Goeury, 60, suffered a life of torment at the hands of her sadistic

mother and a violent husband. A devotee of classical music and a singer, she spent part of her fortune on recording a CD with the London Session Orchestra. Requiem for my Mother proves that while money may not buy love, it can purchase vengeance.

Chirac opens new chapter in France's grand follies

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

ON TUESDAY President Chirac will personally inaugurate France's new national library in southeast Paris, one of the largest, costliest and most bitterly debated buildings ever put up.

The library is the brainchild of François Mitterrand, after whom the library will be named, through the gritted teeth of M Chirac, his successor, who did his level best to scupper the project from the start.

First mooted at a July 14 garden party in 1988, the library at Tolbiac on the Left Bank of the Seine was Mitterrand's obsession, the grandest of his *grands travaux*.

Almost a year after his death it will be opened to the public as a testament to the late President's literary vision — or his colossal vanity, depending on your point of view.

Critics of the new British Library, hugely over budget and a decade overdue, may take some solace from the history of France's national library. Formed by four L-



The National Library, designed to resemble two open books, cost £4 billion and will employ 2,700 staff

shaped glass and steel towers designed to look like open books, the building has cost a staggering Fr30 billion (£4 billion), or six times the initial estimate, making the £500 million for the new British Library seem a bargain.

Some 2,700 staff will be

required for a building with space for 1,650 readers. Five miles of delivery belts carry books on a high-tech retrieval system, and running the building will eat up a tenth of the country's annual culture budget.

If the British Library project

speaks of bureaucratic delay and mismanagement, its Paris counterpart is an astonishing reflection of French presidential ability to push through a pet architectural project regardless of cost, necessity or the views of others. Construction has taken just five years.

The need for such an enormous undertaking was always open to question, and a petition by some of France's most prominent intellectuals described the design, by French architect Dominique Perrotti, as "spectacularly bad". Long before construction

began, critics pointed out that it seemed rather odd to store the books in the towers and the people in the chain mail-cloak basement, and even odder when it emerged that expensive extra protection would have to be installed to prevent heat and sunlight damaging the books.

But Mitterrand was an avid reader and writer and he wanted, in his own words, "one of the biggest and most modern libraries in the world". Later he slightly scaled down his aspirations to "a very big library" and so was born the building's ironic nickname *Le Très Bibliothèque*, or TGB, a mocking echo of France's high-speed TGV trains.

When asked in 1995 whether it should be named after him, Mitterrand gave one of his most elliptical replies: "If you were charged with that decision and you asked me to take that decision, I would say no." What he meant, clearly, was "yes".

When he suspected the Socialists were going to be trounced in the 1993 election, he accelerated the construction programme to ensure that

a future Gaullist government could not tear it down, and the day the Socialists duly lost, Mitterrand went to visit "his" library.

Supporters of the project, who tend to be devotees of the late President, insist that the building is a "democratic" structure, opening learning to the masses, and a tribute to France's love of literature.

Others see it as a *folie des grands* on an epic scale. One of these was M Chirac, who as Mayor of Paris donated the 17 acres of former farmland on which the library now stands and then delayed planning permission.

When squatters took up residence there in 1991, M Chirac, normally no friend of squatters, made a point of going to see them.

All such reservations will be forgotten next Tuesday, of course, as a Very Big Building is, for an embattled President of whatever stamp, a very big photo-opportunity.

M Chirac will cut the ribbon, but as future generations pass by those vast legs of steel and glass they will think of François Mitterrand, which is exactly how he planned it.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

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OPINION

The inspirational power of fruit and vegetables is demonstrated again — on the football terraces



THEATRE

Derived from Fellini's film, the musical *Nine* never shapes into a coherent evening

THE TIMES ARTS



OPERA

Plaudits for Plácido Domingo as Covent Garden stages its Gold and Silver Gala



ON MONDAY

From *Ragtime* to showtime: Benedict Nightingale surveys the latest musicals in North America

As Shakespeare so nearly wrote it music be the love of food, hand me that stick of celery. No, readers, I don't want to lie down until my head feels better. I am referring to the bizarre events that are unfolding, like some inscrutably symbolic Polish film, at Gillingham Football Club.

The fans of this hitherto unremarkable team have taken to singing a ditty called *The Celery Song*, the lyrics of which are fitted — with Auden-esque ingenuity, I may say — to a popular terrace tune. I won't dwell on the words, except to note that the improbable activity they suggest falls somewhere between the *Kama Sutra* and *Greenpeace*. *Monday*, and would doubtless be declared medically unwise by Dr. Stuttsford.

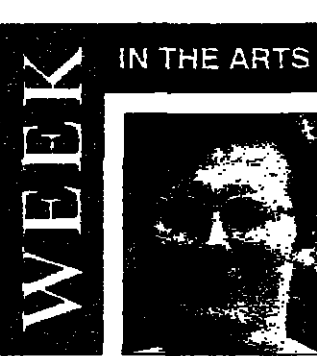
The point is that at the song's climax (as it were) the fans suddenly hurl sticks of celery onto the pitch. It is said to be a thrilling spectacle, worthy of Cecil B. De Mille. But unfortunately the Gillingham goalkeeper — clearly no connoisseur of Surrealism — has

Is it art, or is it a nice mixed salad?

objected to bombardment by a flying harvest festival. Now the authorities propose to search fans for celery and other dangerous vegetables before admitting them. This is not the first time that the rich metaphorical potential of horticulture has added extra frisson to the noble game of football. Many a dull Saturday at Manchester City was enlivened by the Giant Inflatable Banana Cult which recently gripped its supporters. Nottingham Forest fans used to have a *Pineapple Song*, honouring not the celebrated Vanbrugh folly at Castle Howard but the remarkable culture of one of their players. And the former England football manager Graham Turner was famously depicted as a turnip in the tabloid press after a display of prodigious mediocrity.

All of which demonstrates what gardeners already know: that the

inspiration for all truly memorable acts of creativity is not love, death, sex or warfare. It's fruit and veg. Or sometimes trees. That has been true from the earliest days. An apple, you will recall, plays a big role in the Book of Genesis. In the Greek myth of the Judgment of Paris, and in the Snow White fairytale. Aristophanes, by contrast, found significance in this evocative vegetable in his plays is understood by scholars to be a coded reference to sexual practices that Mrs Bonomy would certainly not allow through her V-chip. Indeed, Aristophanes' risqué was probably the first horticultural double entendre — forerunner of such risqué musical hall songs as *Let's All Go Down the Strand (Have a Banana)* and of course *I've Got a Lovely Bunch of Cooconuts*.



RICHARD MORRISON

Opera is bursting with horticultural arias. Indeed, Prokofiev's *Love of Three Oranges*, is entirely about a prince infatuated with a trio of Seville's juiciest. For him, if not for Ms Jeanette Winterson,

oranges really are the only fruit. You probably have to be a metaphysical poet to declare, as George Herbert did: "Oh, that I were an orange tree!" But Handel's opera *Serse* opens with the raddled Persian monarch making love to a tree. Tchaikovsky's most popular ballet was inspired by nuts. Rossini composed an orchestral suite, *Les Quaires Mendicants*, in praise of dried fruit. And the names of countless pop groups — from the Red Hot Chili Peppers to those new Tory activists, the Spice Girls — attest to the abiding charisma of the market garden. As W.S. Gilbert recommended to aspiring poets in *Pastimes*:

... a sentimental passion of a vegetable fashion must excite your languid spleen.

An attachment to la Plato for a bashful young potato or a not too French french bean.

And anybody who saw the splendid National Gallery exhibition of Spanish still-lives last year will know how subtly the Old Masters could use a good mixed salad to suggest darker layers of meaning. What Velázquez couldn't say about sex or mortality with a cabbage isn't worth saying.

But many present-day painters also specialise in the fruit and veg business. Recently the ICA Gallery in London displayed a weird painting called *Cats and Watermelons* by Gabriel Orozco. To the untutored eye it looked like a lot of tins of catfood balanced on fruit. But to *The Times*' art critic, Richard Cork, the painting suggested "how gross the endlessly repetitive abundance of supermarket produce can be". Food for thought there, then. Personally, I never push a trolley

round Tesco now without thinking how gross the endlessly repetitive abundance of modern art can be. Of course, fruit also offers our language a metaphor for every human condition. The lunatics among us have gone bananas, or at least a little nutty; the jealous demonstrate *sour grapes* if we land a plum assignment; the corrupt are *rotten apples*; our bumptious offspring are *pir-squeaks*; and our thwarted plans turn *pear-shaped*.

Mind you, such metaphors can be misunderstood. There is a story about the Italian conductor Toscanini who, while rehearsing in New York, had a flaming row with a trumpeter. "Get out!" the maestro screamed. "Nuts to you," the trumpeter snarled back. Whereupon Toscanini retorted: "It's too late to apologise." He clearly thought he had been offered some sort of ancient culinary peace-olive.

Perhaps the trumpeter should have given Toscanini a burst of *The Celery Song* instead. With all the actions.

Too big for its boots by half

This Broadway musical (book by Arthur Kopit, music and lyrics Maury Yeston, inspiration Federico Fellini) has taken 14 years to cross the Atlantic, and took most of its two-hour length to inustinate itself past my resistance to what it offers, even then reaching only a short way past. Yeston's contributions are interesting, in patches: the quality of performances (14 women, one man) is high; the design infuriates.

The distant origin of the piece is Fellini's film *8½*, where the hero, Guido Contini, is a film director with

Nine Donmar

a creative block. Women pursue him, he remembers others, fantasises being coddled by them all, and his world collapses in upon him. The film won prizes back in 1961 and doesn't look so good today, but the idea remains bracingly original and to use it as the basis for a musical called for strong nerves. Unfortunately, and despite the shimmering elegance of the women, Guido's predicament remains unconvincing for too long. His wife (Susannah Fellows) sings about him in *My Husband Makes Movies*, where the middle section of sad recollection is wistfully orchestrated. The music pastiches various past styles: for the Grand Canal scene the stage fills with water. Clonk clonk go the women's heels as they walk along the corridors behind the audience, or clank clank on the metal walkway round the balcony. We have to accept that Guido makes films

Sara Kestelman (centre) in a scene from *Nine*, based on Fellini's classic film, 8½

because his wife, producer, paparazzi and critics tell him so, but there is none of the paraphernalia of film-making to give their statements body. Larry Lamb's Guido, physically more a Truffaut than a Fellini (or a Mastroianni), develops an angry vigour as the show proceeds, and a snarl under the fierce top-lighting that emphasises his last terror. But the show equips him with too little to arouse our concern. So he is lumbered with a Catholic childhood, a suicidal mistress, a lesbian producer (Sara Kestelman)? Life can be tough. From heaven his mother (Dilys Laye) says "Shape up." *Nine* is about a man who finds this impossible to do.

and the show, inevitably made up of fragments, has not shaped itself either. Now to the design. By Anthony Ward. To suggest self-regard he lifts an enormous mirror across the back of the stage, but if you sit in the last two rows of the side stalls you'll see little of what's reflected in it or visible through it. Perhaps it does not matter if the stalls see so little of the women treading the gallery — they're just fragments and figments, aren't they? — but

it's intensely annoying, and director David Leveaux should have sent Ward back to the drawing board.

JEREMY KINGSTON

Master tenor of the House

OPERA Gold and Silver Gala Covent Garden/BBC 2

THE gold celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the first home-grown production at the Royal Opera after the war, Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*. The silver was part of the ongoing tributes to Plácido Domingo, who made his debut here 25 years ago this month. The silver won.

Only at the beginning of each half of the evening was there acknowledgement of the house's reopening. Asher Fisch, drafted in from Vienna as a late replacement for the indisposed Edward Downes, began with the *Carmen* prelude to Act 1. This was the first opera given by the new company. Part two began with the Act IV prelude to *The Fairy Queen*. There were glimpses of the original sets, Edward Burra's for *Bizet* and Michael Ayrton's for Purcell. The singing might have been a bit shaky 50 years ago, but someone knew how to choose top designers.

Apart from that it was Domingo all the way. When, at the close he was presented with Covent Garden's long service medal, appropriately

silver, he apologised for the cold which has been sweeping through the cast of the current *Tosca*. There was no need. Domingo's voice was still in tremendous shape: warm, flexible, featherlight when needed. And, in his 168th appearance at the house, he was out to show a range of repertory no other living tenor has equalled.

Rather saucily he included a number of roles now associated with Roberto Alagna who, with Angela Gheorghiu, was among the stars onstage. There was *Nemorino*, where he was joined in the Act I duet from *Elisa* by the witty Leonora Vadova. Earlier she had shown herself as a most delectable Donizetti in *Norina*'s opening aria from *Don Pasquale*. Domingo also chose the Cherry Duet from *L'amico Fritz*, a recent

Alagna/Gheorghiu party piece, with Veronica Villareal as his not very successful partner. And there was Don Carlos, possibly Alagna's best role to date.

But Domingo's most heartfelt singing was reserved for Rodriguez's prayer from Massenet's *Le Cid*, an opera never seen at Covent Garden either before the war or after.

Alagna appeared unfazed and replied with another rarity, *Rachel, quand tu Seigneurs* from Halévy's *La Juive*. He showed himself a José in the making when he was joined by Gheorghiu in *Parle-moi de ma mère* from *Carmen*. Both, though, opted for a folk song in the second half. Romanian for her and Neapolitan for him, which let the tone down a bit.

Domingo took up the baton for Lehár's *Gold and Silver Waltz* — what else? — and Susan Graham, one of the evening's great successes, as Orlofsky led the company in praise to King Champagne, courtesy of *Fledermaus*.

JOHN HIGGINS

THEATRES

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Philip Howard



The case of the red-handed leak

We live in a culture of leaks. Watson, Sherlock Holmes' friend, was bent over a photocopier that had been installed in his dressing-room at 221B Baker Street. "To replace the old cliché about a sieve, today we have to speak of someone being as leaky as a table cloth," Nico, or, I sometimes fear, as leaky as a Cabinet meeting.

This was a dull day towards the middle of December 1996. My practice is seldom absorbing at this time of year. So I had called on my old friend to see what new game he had. And for a while I watched Holmes while he fiddled over the fax parameters and then, instructed by a message blinked in lights, added a note from a glass pipette. All other men are specialists, but Holmes' specialism is omniscience. Although he is now approaching his 150th birthday, he seems as adept with the Internet and e-mail as he used to be at the analysis of tobacco ash and diagnosis of obscure poisons.

Having completed his fiddling, Holmes pressed the one-touch speed-dial button, and the machine began to shake and emit peals of bells and booms of muffled gongs. Holmes sank back into the chaise-longue, filled his pipe with shag from the tin end of the Persian slipper from General Trading, and fixed me with his quizzical look. "What do you know of leaks, Watson?" he asked through a miasma of smoke.

"I know that the systematic leaking of official documents has become endemic in the Civil Service," I replied, warmly. "I know that this constant stream of leaks pollutes the body politic and betrays the professional confidentiality of Whitehall. Why only yesterday Michael H—"

"Hush, Watson," cried my friend, placing his forefinger on his thin lips. "In this new world of bugs, even Mrs Hudson's familiar walls may have microchips ears. Let us put any electronic buggers off the scent by referring to the gentleman you were about to name as 'Tarzan'. As you are aware, he is among the stars in the political firmament, and retains hopes of becoming Prime Minister. This new case has come directly from him. He has asked me to find out who was responsible for the 94 leaks from secret Cabinet papers in the past month alone."

"Holmes," I cried. "This task must be beyond even your powers. In your previous cases of purloined documents, such as *The Naval Treaty* and *The Three Students*, at least you had clues of handwriting and other evidence to work on. But these electronic systems of copying and transmission have made espionage child's play."

"Precisely," said Holmes. "You have an uncanny knack, my dear Watson, of hitting the bull's-eye without even seeing the target. You look at everything from the point of view of a story instead of a scientific exercise. Now whom do your lunchtime companions at the Garrick — by the way, I deduce that you lunched on grouse and treacle tart today — whom do you suspect of perpetrating these continual leaks?"

"Ministers accuse the Opposition," I replied. "The Opposition blames the Government. Both suspect the Civil Service. And all blame the gentlemen of the press."

"And I have just demonstrated that all of them are wrong," cried Holmes, a smile of triumph lighting up his austere features. "Observe." And he tapped me over to the photocopier, which was now blinking an array of messages such as "Reload with A3".

"None of the gentlemen blamed for leaking by your bad boys' table" at the Garrick is capable of handling such sophisticated electronic machinery. If, as I have just demonstrated, even I cannot manage them, how could they? They are used to having such tasks performed for them by messenger boys. They are like children with the new technology. But conversely their children find it child's play, as just now you inadvertently remarked. Since no children are employed at the Treasury, but only middle-aged suits, their machines must be leaking spontaneously through the Internet and printing out on the machine of our old friend, Mr Horace Harker of the central Press Syndicate. How often have I said to you that, when you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth?"

"Wonderful!" I ejaculated. "Faz," said Holmes.

The Prince of Wales explains how the Muslim critique of materialism helped him to rediscover the sacred

Islamic spirituality and the decline of the West

I start from the belief that Islamic civilisation at its best, like many of the religions of the East — Judaism, Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism — has an important message for the West in the way it has retained an integrated and integral view of the sanctity of the world around us. I feel that we in the West could be helped to rediscover the roots of our own understanding by an appreciation of the Islamic tradition's deep respect for the timeless traditions of the natural order.

I believe that process could help in the task of bringing our two faiths closer together. It could also help us in the West to rethink, and for the better, our practical stewardship of man and his environment — in fields such as health-care, the natural environment and agriculture, as well as in architecture and urban planning.

Modern materialism is unbalanced and increasingly damaging in its long-term consequences. Yet nearly all the great religions of the world have held an integral view of the sanctity of the world. The Christian message with, for example, its deeply mystical and symbolic doctrine of the Incarnation, has been traditionally a message of the unity of the worlds of spirit and matter, and of God's manifestation in this world and in mankind.

But during the past three centuries, in the Western world at least, a dangerous division has occurred in the way we perceive the world around us. Science has tried to assume a monopoly — even a tyranny — over our under-

standing. Religion and science have become separated, so that now, as Wordsworth said, "Little we see in nature that is ours". Science has attempted to take over the natural world from God; it has fragmented the cosmos and relegated the sacred to a separate and secondary compartment of our understanding, divorced from practical, day to day existence.

We are only now beginning to gauge the disastrous results. We in the Western world seem to have lost a sense of the wholeness of our environment, and of our immense and inalienable responsibility to the whole of creation. This has led to an increasing failure to appreciate or understand tradition and the wisdom of our forebears, accumulated over the centuries. Indeed, tradition is positively discriminated against — as if it were some socially unacceptable disease.

In my view, a more holistic approach is needed now. Science has done the inestimable service of showing us a world much more complex than we ever imagined. But in its modern, materialist, one-dimensional form, it cannot explain everything. God is not merely the ultimate Newtonian mathematician

or the mechanistic clockmaker. As science and technology have become increasingly separated from ethical, moral and sacred considerations, so the implications of such a separation have become more sombre and horrifying — as we see in genetic manipulation or in the consequences of the kind of scientific arrogance so blatant in the scandal of BSE.

I have always felt that tradition is not a man-made element in our lives, but a God-given intuition of natural rhythms, of the fundamental harmony that emerges from the union of the paradoxical opposites that exist in every aspect of nature. Tradition reflects the timeless order of the cosmos, and anchors us into an awareness of the great mysteries of the universe, so that, as Blake put it, we can see the whole universe in an atom and eternity in a moment. That is why I believe Man is so much more than just a biological phenomenon resting on what we now seem to define as "the bottom line" of the great balance sheet of life, according to which art and culture are seen increasingly as optional extras in life.

This view is quite contrary, for

example, to the outlook of the Muslim craftsman or artist, who is never concerned with display for its own sake, nor with progressing ever forward in his own ingenuity, but is content to submit a man's craft to God. That outlook reflects, I believe, the memorable passage in the Koran, "whithersoever you turn there is the face of God and God is all-embracing, all knowing". While appreciating that this essential innocence has been destroyed, and destroyed everywhere, I nevertheless believe that the survival of civilised values, as we have inherited them from our ancestors, depends on the corresponding survival in our hearts of that profound sense of the sacred and the spiritual.

Traditional religions, with their integral view of the universe, can help us to rediscover the importance of the integration of the secular and the sacred. The danger of ignoring this essential aspect of our existence is not just spiritual or intellectual. It also lies at the heart of that great divide between the Islamic and Western worlds over the place of materialism in our lives. In those instances where Islam

chooses to reject Western materialism, this is not, in my view, a political affectation or the result of envy or a sense of inferiority. Quite the opposite. And the danger that the gulf between the worlds of Islam and the other Eastern religions on the one hand and the West on the other will grow ever wider and more unbridgeable is real, unless we can explore together practical ways of integrating the sacred and the secular in both our cultures in order to provide a true inspiration for the next century.

Islamic culture in its traditional form has striven to preserve this integrated, spiritual view of the world in a way we have, not seen fit to do in recent generations in the West. There is much we can learn from that Islamic world view in this respect.

There are many ways in which mutual understanding and appreciation can be built. Perhaps, for instance, we could begin by having more Muslim teachers in British schools, or by encouraging exchanges of teachers. Everywhere in the world people want to learn English. But in the West, in turn, we need to be taught by Islamic teachers how to learn with our hearts, as well as our heads. The approaching millennium may be the ideal catalyst for helping to explore and stimulate these links, and I hope we shall not ignore the opportunity this gives us to rediscover the spiritual underpinning of our entire existence.

This is an extract from the Prince's speech yesterday at Wilton Park.

These damages must be wrong

In our culture of compensation, real men sue. Have we forgotten how to forgive?

It has been a bad week for forgiveness. On a Sunday the lawyer recites, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." To err is human, to forgive divine. But by Monday that is past. By Monday forgiveness is for wimps. Real men sue.

Not a day passes without news of the arrival in another corner of British life of those modern equestrians of the Apocalypse, litigation, compensation and punitive damages. In the past week I recorded the following. A killer and the widow of his victim together sue the hospital that released him. The killer

turb our wellbeing, we sue. Should anyone harm us, distress or disappoint us, we sue. Should anything disturb the norms of bourgeois existence, someone must be blamed and sued. Nobody dare apologise. Nobody says sorry. Nobody forgives. Forgiveness pays no bills. It wins no lottery.

This litigation, as counsel for the Metropolitan Police pleaded last week, has gone far beyond compensation for financial loss. It has even gone beyond that ever-widening area of tort, compensation for physical and mental anguish where no money has been lost. It has charged into a realm from which, until the start of this decade, English law was traditionally excluded, that of awarding "exemplary" (or punitive) damages in personal injury cases. This was customarily restricted to libel cases, where juries could decide on awards as in America. The result is a casino.

Now judges in civil cases are using the law of negligence as a mechanism for punishing faulty public and private services. The old tariff of awards for non-pecuniary loss, such as £7,500 for family bereavement, is being torn up. A court has given away £30,000 to a man for being called "an Irish prat". They awarded £200,000 for the indignity of an armlock. The game knows no bounds. We are on our way to American million-dollar suits for being screwed up by an analyst or scalded with hot coffee.

For many a professional, a suit for such damages means one of two things. He may be crippled with a punishment wholly disproportionate to his negligence, or he must insure. Some negligence lawyers, such as Rodger Pannone, want to ban negligence insurance, so bankrupting almost any professional who is sued and loses. Yet where insurance pays, the cost is dispersed among other premium payers. This dilutes the punishment. Indeed the real punishment is borne not by the negligent but by those who pay premiums and do not claim.

Punitive damages are a lottery whereby a handful of victims benefit hugely, over and above any compensation for their injuries. Not only is the Exchequer deprived of what is in reality a fine, but in the case of public bodies the Exchequer often has to pay the claim. It is obscene: a medieval general flogging the innocent to deter the guilty. Once detach "damages" from any quantifiable



Jayne Zito, who is suing the hospital that released her husband's killer

loss, add in judicial punishment, and the sky's the limit. In America, what is now called tort abuse is rolling on its merry way, thanks to publicity-seeking judges and Robin Hood juries, serviced by contingency-fee lawyers. The result has been soaring insurance costs and widespread contempt for the law. Recently, the Court of Appeal has

sought to bring libel damages down into line with personal personal injury claims. It was ludicrous that a court would award a man a million pounds for a slur on his name but only £7,500 for the loss of his wife. The Master of the Rolls, Lord Woolf, is believed to be eager for similar order to the booming business of punitive damages other than

defamation. Perhaps I can help with this. They should be banned. It is not for civil courts to supplant professional regulators by imposing what amount to criminal punishments. If regulators are not up to their job, that is Parliament to cure (a moot point in the case of the law and the press).

I would go deeper. The rampant advance of punitive damages rots the trust that a client places in the advice of a professional, and rots the integrity the professional offers in return. It makes everyone risk-averse and defensive. Teachers, architects, doctors, policemen, even lawyers can make mistakes, mistakes that may even cause harm. Where there is gross negligence and the harm is quantifiable, compensation is reasonable. Where the harm is grief or a sense of loss, I cannot see what purpose is served by expressing it financially.

There are other forms of redress, including restitution, sincere apology or the disciplining of those guilty of fault. Time was when a hospital or a police station might have said sorry. Time was when saying sorry meant admitting a wrong, explaining how it happened and asking to be forgiven. Such exchanges reinforce trust. Those who admit their mistakes deserve confidence more than those who refuse and go to court.

In handing down judgment in the Hillsborough case, the judge made a significant comment. He admitted that "there is nothing I can really do" to compensate families who had lost members in the disaster. He then swept aside the normal bereavement tariff and levied a hefty bill of £200,000 on the Yorkshire ratenayers. As if wanting to seem personally generous, he hoped this would "bring them all, if not peace of mind, at least a lowering of the anxiety and hurt they feel". This is a depressing comment on the regenerative power of families and communities. As for punishing the Sheffield police, retribution enough has been visited on them. Judges are now behaving as if the police personally organised the tragedy.

Such judgments imply that there is no place at law for any concept of accident or Act of God. Go to law and the law will find someone to blame. Only money mends. Such largesse, and the ever growing expectation of largesse, weakens an essential bond of a community, the ability to resolve its conflicts and overcome its accidents without recourse to law. It poisons the courtesies and disciplines that hold citizens together. Do not shake hands and make up, it says. Come to the bountiful arms of the law and get rich. Punitive damage overlays the social round of error, explanation, apology and forgiveness with greed, a greed that obliterates them all. It must be wrong.

High notes

THE BLITZ SPIRIT took over at the Royal Opera House on Thursday night, with everyone from stagehands to the Prince of Wales making sure a mere bomb alert did not ruin its biggest evening of the year.

It was the 50th birthday of the Royal Opera's first performance, the 25th anniversary of star turn Plácido Domingo's Covent Garden

debut, and the launch of the Opera House's mammoth £100 million appeal. Tickets were going for £1,000, live broadcasts on the BBC were set up and kick off was planned for 7pm. Then an unattended camera bag was found.

The building was closed off and cleared, divas in mid-garble were forced to evacuate and half of the orchestra, stuck in the resultant

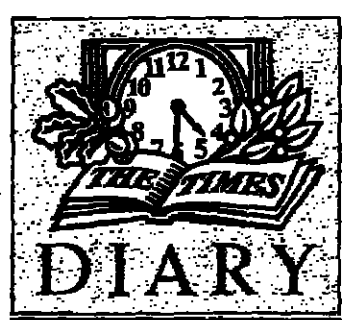
traffic, had to abandon their transport and hot foot it down the Strand in their tails, arriving just as the oboe began tuning up. One poor BBC transmission man stood shivering in Floral Street, headphones on, a cable trailing behind him, but with no music to transmit.

The Prince of Wales, guest of honour and a brick in such situations, spotted the chaos up ahead. Despite having made it only as far as Trafalgar Square from St James's Palace, he hopped out of his car and walked the remaining ten minutes to Covent Garden. Bottoms finally hit seats at 8pm.

News of next year's handover of Hong Kong to the Chinese does not appear to have reached HM Treasury. According to the department's new forward planner, the people of Hong Kong are to have a public holiday in June 1998 to celebrate the Queen's birthday.

Smashed

CANARY WHARF in East London was a place best avoided on Wednesday night as the photographers of the *Daily Mirror* went on the rampage. They were holding their Christmas party in Davy's wine bar when one of their number, a heavily moustached bruiser called Mike Moore, took objection to one



of the waiters and let fly with a side-winder which broke the man's nose. As the police were called, the waiter laid into Moore, who is now known round the office as the Elephant man on account of his severely battered features.

Towards the end of the evening, Kent Gavin, royal photographer and a favourite of Diana, Princess of Wales, was spotted asleep on a train station bench, kissing his mobile phone. Good to see yesterday's *Mirror* splash, exposing the drunken antics of the *EastEnders* crew during their own Christmas fling.

Performers' pre-show foibles are raked over in next month's BBC Music magazine. Vladimir Horowitz, pianist, liked to have all the windows of his hotel blacked out and regular helpings of Dover sole. Nigel Kennedy prefers a modest pot of tea. Naturally enough,

Luciano Pavarotti has the grandest suspicion. He likes to find a bent rusty nail on the floorboards before taking the stage. Resourceful stagehands have been known to plant one to save time.

Paint job

NEVER the easiest works of art to comprehend, one of Piet Mondrian's linear pieces elicited a surprisingly violent reaction from one art student the other day. He threw up on it in disgust. Strolling up on Mondrian's *Composition in Red White and Blue*, in New York's

Museum of Modern Art, Jubal Brown, a Canadian, rumbled gently then erupted. He had prepared for his art vandalism by eating nothing but blue cake icing, blue jelly and blueberry yoghurt for days.

After he was apprehended, the "Primary Colors Barber", as he is known to New York police, confessed that he had already vomited in red on a Raoul Dufy in an Ontario gallery and had been planning to vomit in yellow on another unnamed piece. He had given his escape the title *Responding to Art*.

Latest project from the National Children's Wear Association is a consumer magazine that monitors the clothing and eating habits of children up to their early teens. Its title? *Sulk*.

Moon dust

AMERICA'S ANSWER to Terry Major-Ball has died, aged 88. Neil "Moon" Reagan, Ronald's only sibling, was three years older than Ronald and was always the big roistering one against his more reserved brother. Amid some low-rent competition — Billy Carter, drunk, Roger Clinton, reformed drug addict — Moon was a model presidential brother.



Reagan: conservative

He was named Moon while on his high school football team after Moon Mullins, a cartoon character. A successful radio and advertising director, he was also a lifelong conservative and sometimes dismissive of what he perceived as his brother's rather soft politics. At his brother's first presidential inauguration ball, Moon had terrible trouble getting in. "Look, I'm the President's brother," he said to a security guard. "Yeah right," he was told. "You're the tenth guy to try that one."

P.H.S



Prince Charles: You'll never guess how I got there



INSTABILITY AHEAD

France has again prevailed over Germany

Yesterday's apparent agreement on a stability pact for the future European Monetary Union was hailed as a famous victory by European leaders gathered at Dublin. Perhaps it was, although it is hard to see how France and Germany could both have been as satisfied as they claimed. Officials representing the two nations remained at loggerheads about the most important details of the pact until the very last moment. Indeed, within minutes of announcing that a deal had been struck, the French and German ministers in Dublin were presenting diametrically opposed interpretations.

Theo Waigel, the German finance minister, declared that the pact had achieved his objective of making the euro a "hard" and a "credible" currency by enforcing "quasi-automatic" fines on countries which breached the budget limits in the Maastricht treaty. Meanwhile, in another room of Dublin Castle, President Chirac's spokeswoman was saying that France had "won agreement on all the main points". In particular, she said, the accord left the decision on whether or not to levy fines to the discretion of ministers, as France had always demanded. This was a striking divergence, even by European standards.

Looking at the texts actually agreed at Dublin, the truth seems to be closer to the French version. Countries running an "excessive deficit" will be completely exempt from sanctions if they are suffering from a deep recession. More importantly, there is a provision which allows countries not suffering from a deep recession to argue that their deficits are "nevertheless exceptional". Germany was determined to narrow down these "exceptional" circumstances in a legally-binding text and in this central objective it failed. In practice, therefore, the decision on when and whether to levy fines will remain in the hands of ministers — as demanded not only by France, but also by Britain, and every other European country apart from Germany and Holland.

The overriding of German insistence on automatic fines is welcome, although the very principle of levying fines, not to mention their astronomical levels, should remain unacceptable to those who value national economic sovereignty. But the

tortuous process of reaching this agreement offers even more important insights than the precise details agreed. It foreshadows the clashes of national interest that will dominate monetary policy in the Tower of Babel at the new European Central Bank. It also illustrates the way that Helmut Kohl has lost control of the EMU process.

Going right back to the Maastricht treaty itself, Herr Kohl has repeatedly drawn lines in the sand and then been pushed beyond them. Herr Kohl wanted greater powers for the European Parliament as a quid pro quo for EMU. He failed when this question was shuffled off the European agenda. Herr Kohl said there should be no "arbitrary" deadlines for EMU. He failed when President Mitterrand wrote the 1999 deadline into the Maastricht treaty. Herr Kohl wanted clear and automatic fines. Now he has also failed on this score. And looking toward the future, Herr Kohl has insisted that the Maastricht convergence criteria should be strictly observed. Judging by the growing confidence about membership, not only in France, but also in Italy and Spain, he will also fail in this respect.

In a sense, Germany's repeated failure to impose its will on the rest of Europe, even in the monetary field in which it has so long been dominant, might be considered good news. The idea that single currency will tame Germany's monetary power is indeed the main argument used by the French for their dogged persistence with the EMU project. The German public, however, does not yet realise how many compromises Herr Kohl has made; the Chancellor has certainly not been honest with his voters about how much of Germany's monetary power he is giving away.

Looking beyond the bureaucratic battles and the power-politics of summit deals, it is hard to believe that a single currency based on a fundamental deception of the German people and the financial markets could bring either prosperity or stability to Europe. With every new "breakthrough" in the EMU process, it becomes clearer why Britain should not only stand aside from the single currency, but also attempt to dissuade, or prevent, its neighbours from forging ahead with this folly.

PUT UP OR TOP UP

The LSE is right to consider new funding arrangements

There is one education policy on which Labour and Conservative have long stood shoulder to shoulder: opposition to plans for "top up" fees in British universities. Whenever the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals has edged in this direction, it has been rebuffed. The London School of Economics, which has long enjoyed a reputation for radicalism, is now to be congratulated for a much needed challenge to this consensus.

After three years of often anguished deliberation, a clear majority of the Court of Governors has backed the principle that, from 1998, the LSE will charge an extra levy to home students. This change displays a sense of realism both about the particular needs of this institution and about the probable trend in the funding of all higher education. It still remains contingent on no new arrangements emerging from the current review by Sir Ron Dearing or from innovation by Tony Blair. But opponents of "top-up" among the LSE's hierarchy hold out little hope. According to Leslie Hannah, the acting director of the school, "everything suggests tax payers are not willing to pay for high quality education".

That quotation is of course in the familiar language of the university establishment. Even if an incoming Labour administration were committed to a substantial boost in expenditure, education for the over-18s has a much weaker claim on the nation's needs than either nursery or secondary schools. For two decades after the Anderson and Robbins reports of the 1960s, higher education received generous support, but at a substantial cost in missed opportunities

elsewhere. That view is shared by policymakers of all persuasions. The enormous expansion of student numbers since 1979 has been achieved largely by stretching resources. Universities cannot expect forever to deal with the intake levels of the 1990s on the financial arrangements of the 1960s.

There may be no single solution to this dilemma. Indeed, considering the vast range of higher education in Britain today, it would be odd if there were one. The "top-up" fee is an option worth testing and the LSE is a particularly appropriate pioneer. It has long been a place of international excellence in the social sciences but has been restricted by a core income much smaller than that enjoyed courtesy of endowments in Oxford and Cambridge. Its site, though charming, is cramped. Under its dynamic former director, John Ashworth, it sought numerous solutions, including the sadly unsuccessful attempt to acquire the old GLC headquarters at County Hall.

The school should certainly have the reputation to attract high quality home students despite the supplementary charge. It already has a large percentage of overseas students who are quite willing to pay more than their British counterparts. Only by such experimentation can the financing of our universities develop. The academic body has put much thought into protecting potential applicants from poorer backgrounds. Talk of "privatisation" is nonsense. By its brave decision, the LSE has embarked on a course which may be its own salvation as a leading research and teaching centre. It may also prove to be of exceptional value to higher education elsewhere.

FALKLANDS FEVER

Prospectors and Treasury officials eye the South Atlantic

Every country, like every family, has a wish-list of projects it would undertake were it to become rich. Oil has turned more countries from rags to riches than any copper seam, diamond mine or gold rush; and it seems set to do so again. If seismic exploration is a reliable indicator, one of the world's most distant and sparsely populated territories is set to become a nation of multi-millionaires. The Falkland Islands could, in a few years, be very rich — a prospect which for the 2,400 inhabitants is not universally welcome.

Money usually starts quarrels. Not only the islanders are waiting to see what the seas will yield: the British Treasury is casting eager eyes on any oil income. For if the companies exploring the tranches, licensed in October, find oil in commercially viable amounts, the money would pay for more luxuries than any of the sturdy folk who emigrated to the windswept colony could ever have imagined. Already the islands have been transformed since the 1982 invasion by a £20 million annual income from fishing licences; and with a new hospital, school, swimming pool, sports hall, roads, air links, satellite phones and a computer for almost every inhabitant, the Falklands are well on the way to being a

computer-literate and well-travelled society. Now new vast wealth moves into view. Should it share it with new immigrants or with the mother country?

Britain has no doubt that the Falklands owe this country a lot, and can now well repay the debt. Once the Treasury sees a runaway gusher, its interest cannot be capped. A direct levy could provoke a new Boston tea party. But no Falklander is an islander entire of himself: all, uniquely among the scattered remnants of the colonies, are British citizens. And citizens have obligations as well as rights — the greatest of which is to pay their taxes according to their means.

Already the islanders are offering to support the 2,000-strong British garrison, although they refuse to commit themselves to a figure until they know what they may be earning. That is only a start: how about a sizeable contribution to the rest of the Navy, or to Britain's social services or even, as thanks for British lives sacrificed, to the nation's charities and good works? Oil exploration is indeed a lottery, and the faraway Falklands may be a lucky winner. But like all winners, there will be no respite from those knocking at the door.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Jam every day for suffering drivers

From the Director General of the Chartered Institute of Transport

Sir, Tuesday's traffic gridlock was a serious incident that naturally received comment in your columns (report and leading article, December 12); but with official forecasts of traffic levels doubling over the next 25 years we may soon come to accept as normal such conditions which will seriously weaken our economy, drive investment into other countries in Europe, and give rise to costly problems of health and pollution.

The Government showed in its Green Paper, *Transport — the Way Forward* report and leading article, April 26, that it now recognises the severity of the problem. What it did not indicate was any commitment to a comprehensive solution. Very real gains have been made in the management and marketing of London public transport systems but investment has fallen far behind what is needed to keep pace with increasing demand. The latest Budget, in reducing the support funding for London Transport, suggested that government has no commitment to dealing with this.

As we showed in our recent report, *Better Public Transport for Cities*, major investment in quality public transport is essential if we are to solve these horrendous urban problems. But the Government must initiate a city-wide strategy which includes sticks as well as carrots, and work to generate public understanding of its importance nationally. Transport managers cannot achieve this satisfactorily on their own — but we will willingly support a government lead.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD P. BOTWOOD,
Director General,
The Chartered Institute
of Transport, UK,
80 Portland Place, W1,
December 12.

From Mr David Robinson

Sir, My drive home around the South Circular last night was like a dream; almost no traffic. It was only this morning that I realised it was no dream, but a silver lining.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID ROBINSON,
15 Sefton Street, Putney, SW15,
December 11.

Road safety

From Mr J. M. Hocking

Sir, I read with great interest your Steering Column (Car 96, December 7) and completely agree with John Nichol, ex-Torpedo pilot, that there should be TV commercials for safer driving.

Highways Agency staff, together with all those involved in the daily running and maintenance of the trunk and motorway network, have tried without success to get the Department of Transport to invest in safety commercials. We have been turned down on the grounds that such commercials would not give a good rate of return compared with, say, drink-driving commercials.

It is of particular concern that innovative traffic management measures such as mobile lane closures are not fully understood by the public and that this causes accidents. In order to make the safest and most effective use of such measures, and thereby avoid having to close off large sections of road, some education of the motoring public is essential.

Yours faithfully,
J. M. HOCKING
(Road engineer, Kent County Council
Highways Department),
3 Wilson Close, Maidstone, Kent,
December 11.

Highway to heaven

From Mr Nigel R. MacNicol

Sir, The highway code for peace on the roads offered by the Christian Road Safety Association (report, December 12) is a welcome antidote to road rage. Scenarios might note that there is a double blessing when forgiveness is extended to a reckless overtake and your prayer for his continuing survival follows his headlong progress.

Firstly, we have the Sermon on the Mount, which might be summarised in part as blessed are you when you react peacefully to obstreperous and truculent people who incommode you.

Secondly, Romans xii. 20 repeats with approval the words of Proverbs xxv. 22: if you are kind to your enemy "thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head", whilst retaining the halo on yours. O what transport of delight...

Yours faithfully, but imperfectly,
N. R. MACNICOL,
9 Church Lane, Greatham, Runcorn,
December 12.

Albright's appointment

From Mr Richard Connaughton

Sir, Apropos the Reverend Margaret L. Dodds's letter today regarding Madeleine Albright's appointment as the first female US Secretary of State, it is not at all unreasonable to review in apparently sexist language what appears to be a sexist appointment.

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD CONNAUGHTON,
Waltham,
Nentcombe, Bridport, Dorset,
December 13.

Value to the nation of literary and historical archives

From the Chairman of the British Records Association

Sir, To Libby Purves ("Books before archives", December 10), literary research is of less value than cataloguing beermats: I cannot agree. It is in fact said that papers of British literary and historical figures cannot always be kept in this country — sad, but not deplorable if, as at the University of Texas, they are well looked after.

What is deplorable is the sale, whether for export or not, of little bits of archives that command public attention and high prices: the first draft of a well-known work, the half-dozen letters from some national figure. Much of the informative value of anyone's papers — poet, statesman, financier, whoever — lies in their integrity: as an undivided whole they add up to much more than the sum of their parts.

Dispersal of an archive can be tantamount to its destruction. Of this there is growing public awareness but, as Mr M. M. Chimes points out (letter, December 7; see also letter, December 11) the recent sale of Brunel papers shows the great need for wider enlightenment.

Yours faithfully,
PAUL D. A. HARVEY, Chairman,
British Records Association,
Lyndhurst,
Farley Hey Road, Durham,
December 10.

Eton snobbery comes in for a caning

From Mr John Pittuck

Sir, Isn't Guy Walters ("Why Eton parents should follow the rules or stay at home", December 10) stretching a point, or being simply naive, in thinking, however lightly, that Prince William could possibly be embarrassed further by the actions of his parents (see also report, December 9)?

Knowledge of their private lives has already reached a much larger public than the congregation at the Eton College carol service: they have, individually, seen to that. I am sure that Prince William's feelings were more likely those of pride that his parents had come together to hear him read the lesson, rather than of the fear of superficial taunts and name-calling from his peers.

While recognising that boarding may once have had its harsh and cruel side, I wouldn't mind betting that Prince William's schoolfellows are, on the whole, kind, understanding, supportive and considerate of his position.

Tongue-in-cheek though the article may be in its exposure of anachronistic schoolboy attitudes and jargon, it is a pity, in my view, that Prince William and his parents should provide the excuse for it.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN PITTUCK,
Hillside Cottage, 62 Dunmow Road,
Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire,
December 10.

Rome and Canterbury

From Mr Bruce V. Jones

Sir, The "common declaration" issued by Archbishop Carey and the Pope (leading article, "When in Rome", December 7) would have had much more relevance to the reality of the everyday life of their respective Churches in the UK if some reference had been made to the situation in Northern Ireland.

While we all move about in some apprehension of the next bomb blast, to be reading of discussions on the female priesthood or papal primacy (reports, December 3-7), descriptions of Dr Carey in full fig, and the pomp of the Vatican can only reinforce the feelings of many that the Churches are irrelevant.

Talks about ecumenicalism would appear to be pointless if the two beliefs cannot handle a real problem right under their noses. Either the Churches really get involved in trying to find a way for the community to live together, or they firmly and publicly disassociate themselves from the two sides.

Yours, with concern,
BRUCE V. JONES,
Down Ampney House,
Down Ampney,
Cirencester, Gloucestershire,
December 9.

From Mr R. D. Bloomfield

Sir, You quote Dr Carey as telling the Pope that both sides should acknowledge the "enormous strengths women bring to the Christian mission" (re-

port, December 6). The Pope surely needed no reminder. The long history of the Church is full of women of profound importance — abbesses, priestesses, theologians, mystics, writers.

But has the Archbishop overlooked the distinction between pastoral and sacerdotal? Our own Hilda of Whitby, that powerful figure in the Anglian story, would have been horrified if it had been proposed to her that she should be ordained, and then celebrate Mass.

The roles of these women in the Church had their own glory and need of no such embellishment.

Yours faithfully,
RAY BLOOMFIELD,
17 Watling Street, Leintwardine,
Craven Arms, Shropshire,
December 6.

Gifted children

From Mr John F. Martin

Sir, The Labour Party proposes to use National Lottery funds to assist the development of talented youngsters and turn them into the Nobel Prize winners of the future (report, December 2; also leading article, same day).

It cannot be denied that to invest in the education and skills of the most gifted children is the best investment any nation can make, but surely that can best be done by selecting such children and giving them the benefit of being formally educated at schools best equipped to develop their talents, and not by "after-school clubs" and "information technology cafes".

That is the justification for the Government's assisted places scheme, which is correctly funded by the Department for Education and Employment and not by raiding National Lottery funds. Yet one of the few unequipped pledges the Labour Party has given, if returned to power, is to stop this excellent scheme.

Yours truly,
JOHN F. MARTIN,
57 Tychester Hill, Loughton, Essex,
December 3.

Hope for millennium

From Mrs Janet Payne

Sir, Michael Smith (letter, December 11) underlines the importance of the millennium's substance. Would it be possible to launch a nationwide essay competition for children and the under-25s?

This would give a chance for those who are going to live in it to express their hopes and expectations for the next century. It might also get them thinking about how such a vision could be realised.

Yours sincerely,
JANET PAYNE,
7 Lindow Road,
Old Trafford, Manchester,
December 13.

From the Reverend Patricia Hopkins

Sir, Ruth Gledhill's assertion (report, early editions, December 3) that "Received wisdom in the Church of England is that most congregations cannot take more than one hour of worship" is cause for alarm. However will they cope in heaven?

Yours faithfully,
P. M. HOPKINS,
Garvestone Rectory,
Town Lane, Norwich, Norfolk,
December 13.

Weekend Money letters, page 31

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046.

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OBITUARIES

GROUP CAPTAIN W. G. G. DUNCAN-SMITH

Group Captain W. G. G. Duncan-Smith, DSO and Bar, DFC and two Bars, wartime fighter ace, died on December 11 aged 82. He was born on May 28, 1914.

In an almost continuous career on fighter operations which was of exceptional length, W. G. G. Duncan-Smith fought in most of the European theatres of the Second World War and was still on active service in the years which followed. He flew Spitfires in the later reaches of the Battle of Britain and on fighter sweeps over France. He was among those who provided the day-long air cover which was mounted over the ill-fated Dieppe raid of 1942. As a wing-leader he flew operations over the invasions of Sicily and Italy and later covered the Anvil landings in the South of France. Finally, some years after the war was over, he was airborne again, commanding the last RAF Spitfires to fly in anger — over the jungles of Malaya in the early 1950s.

Duncan-Smith was imbued with all those qualities which make the fighter pilot. He had courage, skill, a good eye and that relentless desire to be at hand-grips with the enemy, which is the hallmark of the best fighting men. But he was also a man of great tactical sagacity and played a major role in the re-organisation of the concepts of offensive air operations which took place at Fighter Command at the mid-point of the war.

As a leader of men he was loyal to the point that he was prepared to shoulder the blame for — even serious — mistakes made by subordinates. On one occasion he submitted to an official rebuke which by rights ought to have fallen elsewhere. It was simply not in his nature to require a junior to accept such responsibility.

Wilfred George Gerald Duncan-Smith was born in Madras, where his father was stationed as an officer in the Indian Army. He was educated at Morrison's Academy, Crief, but returned to India afterwards and engaged in tea-planting. It was there that he developed the reputation as a shot which was later to stand him in such good stead in the air.

But he also contracted malaria and when he returned to England burning to join the RAF, he failed his medical. His father sent him on a mechanical engineering course during which he joined the

RAFVR and learnt to fly at weekends. When war came the more pedantic medical criteria were relaxed in an hour of desperate shortage of fighter pilots, and he was accepted for squadron service.

He was lucky not to lose his life before his combat career even began. While still under training, he was making a perfectly correct runway approach when another aircraft collided with him and ripped his aircraft off. But Duncan-Smith managed a pancake landing. With the Battle of Britain over, he was sent to 611 Squadron early in 1941. The squadron had suffered a mauling during the Battle, but when Fighter Command went onto the offensive over occupied France it proved itself adept.

Duncan-Smith had his first combat victory on May 17, 1941, when he shot down an Me109 and he followed this up with three more by the end of July. In the circumstances this was an exceedingly high scoring rate since most of the air fighting during the sweeps was done against fighters, a different matter from the rich harvest it had been possible to reap among the German bombers during the defensive Battle of Britain. This performance earned Duncan-Smith the first of his three DFCs.

In August 1941 he went as a flight commander to 603 Squadron, notching up further victories on his way to his first squadron command, of No 64. By this time the Luftwaffe was fielding its new FW190, an aircraft considerably superior to the contemporary marks of Spitfire. But Duncan-Smith's marvellous eye and his ability to bring off deflection shots other men would have missed, made him more than a match for this formidable opponent and he had soon bagged his first one.

On August 19, 1942, he led his squadron over Dieppe, where he shot down two German Do17 bombers. But as he turned for home a burst from a third bomber's tailgunner caught him and he was forced to bale out from his stricken Spitfire. Badly bruised from bouncing off his aircraft's wingtip as he jumped, he plummeted into a polluted patch of sea ingesting a good deal of oil before he was picked up by a crash boat. Injured in both limbs and lungs as he was, he was sent to hospital and told to stay there. But he was impatient to get back into action, discharged himself from hospital next day and was back with his squadron the day



after. He returned to find he had been awarded an immediate Bar to his DFC.

The experience of Dieppe had been a salutary one for the RAF as well as for the military planners. Post-raid analysis revealed that aircraft losses had been extremely high — 108 as against the Germans' 48 — and Fighter Command's C-in-C Trafford Leigh Mallory determined that something should be done

dramatically. By D-Day the RAF was master of the skies over the beachhead.

After a short period commanding the North Weald Wing Duncan-Smith was sent to the Mediterranean theatre in December 1942 and led 244 Wing for the final campaign in North Africa and, then for the invasion of Sicily. With the Allied armies advancing their fronts through Sicily and then up the Italian peninsula, the fighter and fighter-bomber wings which supported them had to be extremely mobile. They had to accustom themselves to moving from airfield to airfield, establishing themselves as quickly as possible to begin offensive operations, either in sand or dust or, in winter, drenching rain and deep mud.

It was an atmosphere in which leadership was of paramount importance. It could lead either to the forging of deep bonds among the men — or, so easily, to total demoralisation. Under Duncan-Smith, 244 and then 324 Wing, which he later led, developed a spirit of buccaneering independence from authority. His personality ensured a harmonious relationship with groundcrews who often laboured to prepare aircraft for battle in the most appalling and makeshift conditions, and with his pilots for whom he was simply a man who could fly a Spitfire by the seat of his pants. The toll he took of the enemy continued to climb throughout this period and he was awarded the DSO for his leadership of each wing.

But he very nearly lost his life on a third occasion when he was sent out to intercept the German reconnaissance aircraft which was daily photographing British Eighth Army positions in Sicily where they were concentrating for the thrust into Italy. On this occasion it was bad luck and not the enemy (nor, as previously, an incompetent friendly pilot) which almost brought him to disaster.

His mission had to be carried out at long range with the help of drop tanks. On this particular occasion the enemy did not appear and when Duncan-Smith switched his tanks prior, reluctantly, to steering course for home, the fuel connection failed and he rapidly began to lose fuel. Again, he was forced to abandon his aircraft and came down in the Strait of Messina, trusting soon to be picked up by a British crash boat from the Sicilian shore. But the strong currents in the narrow strait swept him away from safety

and the bleeper radio beacon on his Mae West was picked up by German patrol craft who soon located and began to machinegun him. By luck a Walrus flying boat found him before they could finish him off, and landing under intense fire, was able to carry him to safety.

In command of 324 Wing in Italy from 1944, Duncan-Smith provided air cover for the US Fifth Army northwards to Cassino and Rome before being sent to support the Allied landings in the South of France in August 1944.

It was on the wings return to Italy from these operations that a disaster happened for which, though it was not his fault, Duncan-Smith took full responsibility, when one of its squadrons ignored his explicit order not to land on the makeshift airfield near Florence if the light was going, but to divert to another. Three of the four squadrons landed safely but by the time the fourth approached the light was impossible for landing. Several pilots and ground crew were killed as landing aircraft collided with those already on the ground. At a court of inquiry convened to apportion blame Duncan-Smith allowed none but his name even to be mentioned. He was duly reprimanded.

By the end of the war Duncan-Smith had a tally of 19 kills officially confirmed. He stayed in the RAF and was to add to his decorations a third DFC, commanding Spitfires (by now exceedingly battle-worn ones) in counter-insurgency operations over the Malayan jungle. In the mid-1950s he had a spell with the USAF flying Sabre jets and he retired in 1959 after a staff job in Germany.

Though not one of nature's business-men, he had a successful career with Triplex for a dozen years from 1960, becoming head of the company's aviation division. In this role one of his most satisfying tasks was to oversee the supply of window glass for Concorde.

After final retirement he lived for some years in Rome, where he wrote his memoir *Spitfire into Battle* (1981). From there he retired to his beloved Scotland until on medical advice he moved to the milder climate of Devon.

He had met his wife Pamela in Naples where she was working as a ballet dancer. They married in 1946. He is survived by her and by their three daughters and two sons, one of whom, Iain, is Conservative MP for Chingford.

IVOR ROBERTS-JONES

Ivor Roberts-Jones, CBE, RA, sculptor, died on December 9 aged 83. He was born on November 2 1913.

WITH his statue of Sir Winston Churchill in Parliament Square, unveiled in November 1973, Ivor Roberts-Jones created one of the grandest works of public sculpture in Britain. It was also probably the last commemoration of its kind. An age more inclined to pillory prominent figures than to praise them has little use for official memorials to its great and good, even when it can agree on who the great and good might be.

Roberts-Jones welcomed the Churchill commission in so far as it gave him the means to spend more time making sculpture. But he enjoyed neither the wrangling that accompanied it, nor the public attention that it brought. He could hardly have taken on a more high-profile project. Under the direction of Sir John Tiley, Conservative MP for Waverley, the public appeal to fund it attracted donations of more than £32,000 in less than five months, with almost 4,500 individuals and organisations contributing. Finding agreement about the details proved less easy.

There was a long, battle-much of it fought in the correspondence columns of *The Times*, about the form the tribute should take. Everybody had their own image of Churchill. Some thought that a statue could never do justice to so monumental and multifaceted a personality. Many, including the subject's widow, thought that the sculpturally crafted statue was the wrong site altogether.

In the end the arguments were more or less resolved: Churchill himself, it seemed, had liked the idea of his own statue on the dominant north-east corner of Parliament



Roberts-Jones and his statue of Rupert Brooke at Rugby; and the statue of Churchill in Parliament Square (right)

Square. Nine sculptors were invited to submit proposals. None was initially accepted, but in 1971 Roberts-Jones was one of two invited to resubmit. He got the commission, though he knew that Churchill's family would have preferred Oscar Nemon, whose bronzes of Churchill already stood in the Members' Lobby of the House of Commons and in Conservative Central Office. It was, he said, "a very unpleasant business".

He retreated to a hired barn in Suffolk and set to work with two and a half tons of clay. The dimensions of the work — the figure itself was to be 12ft tall — were specified in the commission. The sculptor, a small man, set about erecting a vast scaffold of supports, and built an extension to his barn, made of straw bales and polythene sheets, so that he could view the work from 70 feet away.

He survived 20 months of running up and down ladders, cold that froze the clay, and an impromptu private view by a passing bull. The resulting work was unveiled by Lady Spencer-Churchill, in the presence of 800 invited dignitaries, and a vast crowd of onlookers, on November 1, 1973.

The unveiling turned yet more public attention on Rob-

erts-Jones, as admirers and detractors of his work took to the correspondence columns once again. He admitted that there was no real reply to those who dismissed it as "that nasty object".

But he felt that he had fulfilled the commission — "He was, I was told, the Rock of Gibraltar, and I gave them the bloody Rock of Gibraltar" — while still managing to convey some of the complexity he had set out to capture in his subject. If there was an element of caricature in the resulting "indomitable, tense object", that was probably inevitable, given the way in which Churchill caricatured himself.

Ivor Roberts-Jones was the son of a solicitor who also played international football for Wales. He was educated at Oswestry Grammar School and Workshop College, before going on to study art at Goldsmiths' College and the Royal Academy Schools. His parents had hoped that he might study law.

On leaving the RA Schools he travelled in Europe, looking at everything from German Renaissance sculpture to the latest abstract art from France. During the war he served with the Royal Artillery



in India and in the Arakan campaign, and wrote war poetry of some distinction.

From 1946 he taught at Goldsmiths', eventually becoming head of sculpture and remaining there until 1978, that institution's later fame as a breeding ground for pickled cows was some way off. He was appointed CBE in 1975.

His work can be divided into the public sculptures (which included statues of Viscount Slim and Viscount Alanbrooke, a memorial to Augustus John at Fordingbridge, and a forceful work called *The Two Kings* at Harlech Castle); and the more private portrait heads of family and friends.

The latter were what he

preferred. He liked above all to capture subtleties and ambiguities of character. The many examples of his work in British public collections show how well he succeeded. "A face is a bicycle someone rides," he once said, in his favourite sitters, such as Freya Stark and Somerset Maugham, that bicycle journey could be traced in vivid detail.

The psychological insights of his more intimate work are carried over into the best of his public commissions. But he himself felt that "the real irony of my work is that the smaller it is, the nearer you get to me."

His wife Monica, whom he married in 1940, survives him. A son and daughter predeceased him.

PETER HALL

Peter Hall, folklorist and musician, died of cancer in Aberdeen on December 5 aged 60. He was born in London on June 28, 1936.



IT SHOULD not come as a surprise that a Scottish folklorist and musician such as Peter Hall was in fact born within the sound of Bow Bells, since his outstanding contribution to his field transcended national boundaries. His death, following close upon the similarly early deaths of David Buchan in 1994 and Kenny Goldstein in 1995, is a severe blow to folklore and ethnomusicology worldwide.

Hall combined the roles of performer, collector, musicologist and scholar. Although born in London, he was brought up in Aberdeen and Newcastle upon Tyne and went to Aberdeen University in 1955 to read first medicine and then, after National Service, for a science degree. He later took a BEd from the same university, and spent the rest of his professional life in the region as a teacher.

In 1959 he married a fellow student, Marion MacLennan, who was later to become an obstetrician and gynaecologist of international repute. With her he shared a love of music, and with the advent of the folk song revival his obsession with jazz playing turned to a passionate interest in folksong and folklore.

The North-East of Scotland has been known to scholars for hundreds of years as one of the richest areas in the world for its vibrant tradition of folksong. When Professor Francis Child of Harvard initiated a search for the great balladry of Britain in the middle of the last century he was straight away directed to Aberdeenshire.

At the beginning of the 20th century the region produced the 3,500 songs of the Greig-

Duncan Collection, one of the largest and best in existence. Thanks to collectors such as Hamish Henderson of the School of Scottish Studies, it became clear in the 1960s that the area was still rich in song and performers, especially among the travelling people, of whom Jeannie Robertson became a famous example.

Hall entered this treasure-house with enthusiasm, reading widely and collecting from tramps and travellers, farmworkers and North-East folk in general. He was a founder member of the Aberdeen Folk Song Club and established a group to perform the rich North-East material in 1967. The group, *The Gaugers*, issued *Beware of the Aberdonian* in 1976, and was in the process of completing a series of commercial recordings for Aberdeen City Library at the time of Hall's death.

He tape-recorded more than six hundred items of folksong and folktales in Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Banffshire, and in the west of Ireland. Many of these were employed in commercial recordings, or in radio and television broadcasts, and many were lodged with the School of Scottish Studies in Edinburgh.

Hall was a spirited singer and an able musician (having exchanged the jazz trumpet for

the concertina and melodeon), and was invited to perform on radio and television and at concerts and festivals throughout Britain, France, Germany and Belgium. He was much in demand as a musicologist (who could also wear his scholarship lightly) to write record notes, produce broadcasts and judge competitions. He wrote articles, both scholarly and popular, and was the original editor (later musical editor) of the *Folk Revival* magazine *Chapbook*.

Under the supervision of the sociologist Ian Carter, Hall gained an MLitt from Aberdeen in 1985 on the subject of the unique North-East farm workers' songs (the "botchy ballads"). It remains the classic work on the subject. But he was too modest to publish it, preferring to distil much of its content into an authoritative introduction to Volume Three of the *Greig-Duncan Collection*, which he co-edited in 1987. He continued working on his researches until the end, concerned that he was leaving so much unfinished through the sudden onset of his illness.

He collaborated with the MP Norman Buchan (who also died comparatively young, in 1990) to produce *101 Scottish Songs* in 1973, a thorough compilation which was reprinted in 1986. Last year he was invited to be consultant to the Edinburgh International Festival for a triumphant series of 21 concerts based on the Greig-Duncan Collection.

A committed socialist and humanist, Hall was a scientist who loved the arts and a talented photographer whose work was exhibited in Aberdeen Art Gallery. He was kind and generous (especially with his research findings) and a fascinating conversationalist — although sometimes maddeningly didactic.

He is survived by his wife Marion, a daughter and a son.

Weekend anniversaries

TODAY BIRTHS: Nostradamus (Michel de Nodredame), astrologer, Saint-Remy, 1503; Thomas Cochrane, 10th Earl of Dundonald, admiral, Annfield, Hamilton, Lanarkshire, 1775; King George VI, reigned 1936-52, York Cottage, Sandringham, 1895; Paul Eluard, poet, Paris, 1895. DEATHS: Sir John Oldcastle, alleged heretic, "hung and burnt hanging", London, 1417; King James V of Scotland, reigned 1513-42, Falkland, Fife, 1542; Thomas Rymer, archaeologist and historian, London, 1713; Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, composer, Hamburg, 1788; George Washington, 1st American President 1789-97, Washington, 1799; John Loudon, landscape gardener, London, 1843; Leon Faucher, statesman,

Marseilles, 1854; Albert, Prince Consort, Windsor Castle, 1861; George Hudson, the "railway king", London, 1871; Stanley Baldwin, 1st Earl Baldwin of Bewdley, Prime Minister 1923-24, 1924-29 and 1935-37, Astley, Lancashire, 1947; Edward John Higgins, 3rd general of the Salvation Army 1929-34, New York, 1947; Will Fyfe, character comedian, St Andrews, 1947; Juho Paasikivi, President of Finland 1946-56, Helsinki, 1956; Sir Stanley Spencer, painter, Taplow, Buckinghamshire, 1959; William Slim, 1st Viscount Slim, Field Marshal, Governor-General of Australia 1953-60, London, 1970. Professor Max Planck revealed his quantum theory, 1901. Roald Amundsen reached the South Pole, 1911.

TOMORROW BIRTHS: Nero, 5th Roman Emperor, AD54-68, Antium (Anzio), AD 37; George Romney, portrait painter, Dalton-in-Furness, Lancashire, 1734; Charles Cowden Clarke, critic, Enfield, Middlesex, 1787; Alexandre Gustave Eiffel, builder of the tower bearing his name, Dijon, 1832; Niels Finsen, physician, Nobel laureate 1903, Torshavn, Faroe Islands, 1860; Josef Hoffmann, architect, Pirnitz, Czechoslovakia, 1870; Maxwell Anderson, dramatist, Atlantic, Pennsylvania, 1888. DEATHS: Jan Vermeer, painter, Delft, 1675; Isaac Walton, the "Father of Angling", Winchester, 1683; George Hickes, theologian, 1715; Benjamin Stillingfleet, naturalist, London, 1771; Charles Stanhope, 3rd Earl Stanhope, poli-

ician and man of science, Chevening, 1816; Sir George Cayley, pioneer of aerodynamics, Scarborough, 1857; Sitting Bull, chief of the Sioux, on Grand River, South Dakota, 1890; Gregory Rasputin, monk, favourite at the Russian court, murdered, St Petersburg, 1916; Wolfgang Pauli, physicist, Nobel laureate 1945, Zurich, 1958; Charles Laughlin, actor, Hollywood, 1962; Walt Disney, animated cartoonist and film producer, Los Angeles, 1966. The remains of Napoleon Bonaparte were deposited in Les Invalides, Paris, 1840. Nylon yarn was first produced commercially, Delaware, 1939. The Canadian Parliament adopted the maple leaf as the official symbol for the national flag, 1964.

GEORGE VI PROCLAIMED THE EMPIRE GREETED THE NEW REIGN KING'S DECLARATION TO ACCESSION COUNCIL BROADCAST BY THE PRIMATE

The Accession of King George VI was proclaimed on Saturday in London and other capital cities of the Empire.

His Majesty, being this day present in Council, was pleased to make the following Declaration:-

Your Royal Highnesses, My Lords and Gentlemen:

I meet you to-day in circumstances which are without parallel in the history of our Country. Now that the duties of Sovereignty have fallen to Me I declare to you My adherence to the strict principles of constitutional government and My resolve to work before all else for the welfare of the British Commonwealth of Nations. With My Wife as helpmeet by My side, I take up the heavy task which lies before Me. In it

ON THIS DAY December 14, 1936

The King came to the throne two days before his 41st birthday. The Duke of Windsor left Portsmouth in a destroyer for Boulogne where he took train for Vienna.

look for the support of all My Peoples. Furthermore, My first act on succeeding My Brother will be to confer on Him a Dukedom.

THE ARCHBISHOPS BROADCAST "STRANGE AND SAD"

The Archbishop of Canterbury, in his broadcast address last night, spoke of the absence of confusion, strife, and clash of parties during the crisis as a wonderful proof of the strength and

stability of the Throne and the steadiness of the people.

Referring to the ex-King, who "went out an exile," the Archbishop said that seldom, if ever, had any British Sovereign come to the Throne with greater natural gifts for his kingship; yet, by his own will he surrendered his high and sacred trust because of a craving for private happiness. "Strange and sad," said Dr. Lang, "that for such a motive he should have disappointed hopes so high." He gave a sharp rebuke to King Edward's social circle, but he paid tribute to his long years of eager service to the Empire. The Archbishop referred feelingly to the universal sympathy with Queen Mary and to the gratitude due to the Prime Minister.

Turning from the past to the future, he spoke with hopefulness and confidence of the dawn of the new reign, and, as a personal friend for many years, paid tribute to the new King's personal qualities and the service he has already rendered to the State.

Global dimension is the key to educating business chiefs

What has been the most significant organisational change at Westminster during the years of the present Government? Some would say it was when John Major appointed Michael Heseltine as a Deputy Prime Minister with a new portfolio. I think I would point to another reorganisation that took place at the same time. When the Prime Minister was relaunching his administration after the challenge to his leadership, he merged the departments of education and employment.

The creation of the new joint department, under Gillian Shephard, reflected the concern of all politicians today that British economic growth is still being held back by inadequacies of the education system. Successful employment is largely a function of good education.

What is sometimes forgotten is that this applies up and down the whole educational scale. It is more than just getting back to basics in primary schools. Economic success depends very largely on the educational calibre of the brightest of today's young people who will move into the boardrooms of the 21st century.

Education is always about broadening horizons. The higher up the educational scale, the more important it is to think in global terms. No great enterprise nowadays gets very far if the vision of its top management stops at national boundaries.

One man who had a prophetic grasp of the global dimension of education, half a century ago, was Senator J. William Fulbright, an outstanding statesman of the immediate postwar period whose enduring monument is the postgraduate awards

programme which bears his name. With memories of his own days at Oxford, he believed in excellence in education and in the benefits of two-way educational exchanges between America and other parts of the world.

The Fulbright programme has always sought to lay down markers for the future. Today the programme is being strengthened in a way that will have a powerful impact on the calibre of tomorrow's boardrooms.

In the past, many Fulbright scholars went into public service or academia. The new programme puts greater emphasis on potential business leaders. This year a significant proportion of Fulbright Awards are being sponsored by businesses, among them BAT Industries, Marks & Spencer and Citibank.

This substantially increases the funding available to provide



Sir Geoffrey Leigh

for postgraduate exchanges and is in line with the overall shift away from public funding which is taking place in all societies today. But as important as the funding will be the injection of business ethos to the Fulbright programme, thereby helping to

open the eyes of the young elite to the exciting opportunities that exist in business management.

Sponsors will have the satisfaction of knowing that they are helping to perpetuate the Fulbright dream of providing an international understanding through the highest standards in education. But that is not all; there is also a practical potential benefit. By keeping in touch with the students they sponsor, and possibly arranging "internship" for them, sponsoring companies have the opportunity to recruit outstanding candidates to their staff. As Charles McVeigh, chairman of another of the sponsors, Salomon Brothers International, has said: "It's terribly simple. It's enlightened self-interest."

The impact of these sponsored awards on the British business world will be much greater, I believe, than the numbers in-

involved. It will send out an important message about Britain's commitment to creating and attracting the brightest and best. Many talented young people today go into business, but the plain fact is that industry and commerce need still greater access to the best brains available. There is no room for complacency about national attitudes to education, at all levels, from the elementary stages to the best of postgraduate work.

The sponsored Fulbright Awards, as more and more sponsors come forward — from industry, from commerce, from City institutions and elsewhere — will help to channel intellectual quality where it is needed. When the business world involves itself sensibly in the education system, it represents an incentive to educators, not a curb on their freedom. It is a

cliché of business that we operate in a fiercely competitive world. Businesses in the UK, in continental Europe, in America and in the Pacific Rim have more in common than they have dividing them. That is why the education of business leaders has to incorporate the international dimension. The best of British managers need opportunities to do their MBA at a US university — and vice-versa. In education as in business, talent is a scarce resource. Business people know that one of the most important keys to success is identifying the best way to allocate finite resources. It is important to constantly reappraise the way we educate our elite.

□ Sir Geoffrey Leigh, chairman of Allied London Properties, is chairman of the Fulbright Advisory Board.

CTR reverses first-half loss

Central Transport Rental, the old Tiphook transport group, made a first-half pre-tax profit of £10.7 million against £12.8 million losses last time. Debts of £236 million remained at October 31. There is no dividend.

H&H higher

Hardys & Hansons, the Nottingham brewer, announced pre-tax profits of £8.27 million (£3.05 million) for the year to October 4. The final dividend is 6.8p (6.4p).

Ladbroke loses

An out-of-court settlement with the landlord of the Paris Hilton over rent payments will cost Ladbroke £16 million, the betting, gaming and property group said yesterday.

Burnfield buys

Burnfield, the engineering group, has moved into vibration testing with the £24 million acquisition of LDS, a privately owned electromagnetic company.

R-R threat to halve jobs at Tyneside turbine subsidiary

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEARLY half the workforce of Parsons, Rolls-Royce's power-generation subsidiary, may be cut next year.

Rolls-Royce, which has put Parsons up for sale, said it would make 400 people redundant early in the new year because of falling orders and could follow those cuts with another 400 losses depending on current sales negotiations.

Parsons, based in Newcastle upon Tyne, makes turbines and other power equipment. It was put up for sale in July, along with International Combustion, another Rolls-Royce subsidiary in Derby. Then Rolls-Royce said it wanted to withdraw from the steam power-generation business. It said that it would quit the industry either through

sales or plant closures. The company says it is in discussion with a handful of potential bidders for both subsidiaries but the protracted talks and job cuts underline the difficulty it is having in striking an agreement.

While Rolls-Royce and union sources are optimistic about a sale it is by no means clear that the subsidiaries will survive in their present form. It could be that potential buyers are attracted by a breakup of operations.

Job cuts had to come now at Parsons, said Rolls-Royce, because it was becoming uneconomic to maintain a staff of 1,700 with declining workloads. The 400 losses will come at the end of January. Peter Barnes-Wallis, spokes-

man for Rolls-Royce, said that a decision on future cuts would be made by the end of the first quarter in 1997. By then the company also hopes to have clinched a sale.

The redundancies, condemned by the unions for being announced so close to Christmas, were signalled last month when preliminary notices in the redundancy procedure were issued. The notices meant that there was the potential for everyone to be made redundant if no buyer was found and the plant was closed.

The unions, while accepting the potential for wholesale job losses if a sale cannot be agreed, said that much effort had been put into cost reductions.



Chainsaw gang: Barry Gamble, chairman and chief executive of Fountain Forestry, which will be valued at £6.6 million when it joins the Alternative Investment Market

Zetters plans bingo expansion

By KEITH RODGERS

ZETTERS Group, the football pools operator, is planning a further acquisition in the bingo field after completing its £6.5 million purchase of three leisure clubs earlier this week. The company has also ended its contributions to the Foundation for Sports and the Arts, which received almost 5 per cent of its pools turnover, and will use the proceeds to increase payouts to punters.

Pools turnover fell 28 per cent in the six months to September 30 as the National Lottery continued to take its toll. Yesterday, the company reported a fall in interim pre-tax profits, from £993,000 to £511,000, on turnover down from £10.54 million to £7.56 million. The interim dividend remains 5p per share, payable on March 5. The figures include 26 weekly pools competitions, against 27 in the comparable 1995 period.

Paul Zetter, chairman, said he was "extremely confident" about the bingo business, which Zetters has re-entered after eight years. Following the purchase of three clubs from Leisure Workshop, Leslie Hurst, chief executive of its bingo subsidiary Jasmine, and Robert Updell, non-executive chairman, have joined the Zetters board. Mr Hurst will take over as chief executive of Zetters when James Clarke retires next year.

TOURIST RATES

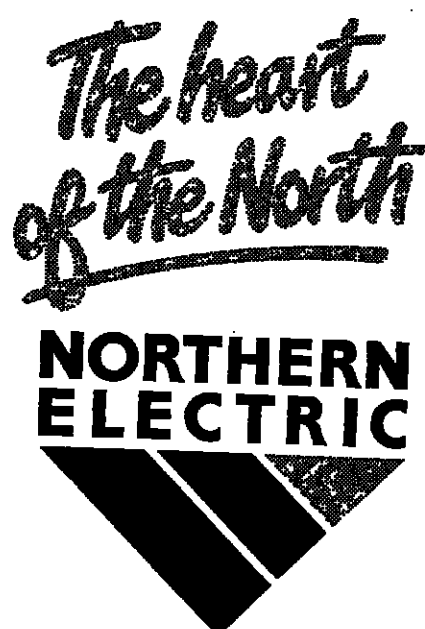
Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia \$	2.18 2.02
Austria Sch	13.96 17.46
Belgium Fr	55.61 51.31
Canada \$	2.254 2.194
Cyprus Cyp	0.808 0.751
Denmark Kr	10.35 9.55
Finland Mk	8.22 7.57
France Fr	9.04 8.39
Germany Dm	2.71 2.50
Greece Dr	421 386
Hong Kong \$	13.43 12.43
Iceland	120 100
Ireland P	1.25 0.97
Israel Shk	5.72 5.07
Italy Lire	2035 2480
Japan Yen	201.40 185.40
Malta	0.687 0.582
Netherlands Gld	3.615 2.765
Norway Kr	2.50 2.28
Portugal Esc	11.25 10.45
Spain Ptas	200.00 200.00
Sweden Kr	289.00 250.50
Switzerland Fr	6.43 7.82
Turkey Lira	222.00 200.00
USA \$	1.88 1.72
	2.30 2.12
	180.00 168.00
	1.72 1.62

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

In the City, Christmas really is a time for giving, with the high-flyers looking forward to multi-million pound bonuses after a record year in the financial markets...

Business, The Sunday Times tomorrow



The views of David Morris, Chairman of Northern Electric, on the bid from CE Electric can be heard on the freephone number below.

FREEPHONE
0800 771177

Shareholders should note that if CE Electric's ordinary offer becomes unconditional as to acceptances, the offer must remain open for acceptance at least until Friday, 3 January, 1997.

J. Henry Schroder & Co. Limited ("Schroders"), which is regulated by The Securities and Futures Authority, is acting for Northern Electric and no one else in connection with the offer and will not be responsible to anyone other than Northern Electric for providing the protections offered to customers of Schroders or for providing advice in relation to the offer.

The directors of Northern Electric accept responsibility for the information contained in this advertisement and in the recorded message and, to the best of their knowledge and belief (having taken all reasonable care to ensure that such is the case), the information contained in this advertisement and in the recorded message is in accordance with the facts and does not omit anything likely to affect the import of such information.

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some travelling executives were choosing flights which earned maximum points rather than sticking to airlines offering the most economic flights

The Financial Times 7/10/96 (from MORI survey)



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A WORKING WEEK FOR: TIM HELY HUTCHINSON

Defender of profits and the popular novel

Martin Waller meets a publisher unafraid to ruffle the feathers of his rivals or to take aim at their destructive literary snobbishness

Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday

PUBLISHERS' offices are delightful places, where erudition and culture rub shoulders with a certain faded Bohemianism. Oak shelves are filled with precious first editions in rooms bursting with comfortable, worn sofas into which tweedy old buffers sink clutching cups of China tea. The background rill is from delighted debutantes who have chosen, in those few years between finishing school and a good marriage, to devote themselves to fine literature.

Such is the public perception. The head office of Hodder Headline, Britain's biggest independent publisher, is a particularly brutal, security-conscious office block at the nastier, more traffic-bound end of the Euston Road. The shelves are gleaming white metal — everything in the building is, for that matter. Even the lift looks like it belongs in a 1950s science-fiction movie. Prominent in the reception area is a dumpbin of the oeuvre of Paul and Pauline Calf, the foul-mouthed fictional alter egos of the comedian Steve Coogan. Guaranteed bad language and filth, it says on the cover. Something is clearly wrong.

Tim Hely Hutchinson, chief executive, is not much-loved among the tweedy set, and the feeling is reciprocated. His sin is to run a publisher as a business, with the intention of maximising profit. He is probably the most prominent of the new breed of publishers, for whom the bottom line is more important than the Booker Prize. He is also known in the trade, wrongly, as the man who single-handedly broke the Net Book Agreement, the cosy cartel that fixed the price of books for so long.

"Publishing went through a very incompetent phase in the 1950s and 1960s. If you look back over the correspondence and history of the house of Macmillan, where I started in publishing, it is very clear that the people who ran it were absolutely on top of the size of the business. They were both bookish and businesslike. But some publishers grew beyond the grip of one individual — that's where the breakdown came. Some of the people who took over were aping some of the aspects of their predecessors, but they were missing the entrepreneurial strength the founders had."

Hodder was formed by the 1993 merger of 125-year-old Hodder & Stoughton, one of publishing's blue bloods, with Hely Hutchinson's own Headline, which he founded in 1986 and took to the stock market five years later. Then it was valued at £11 million; three years after the merger, and a few injections of shareholders' cash, the group is worth £77 million.

There have been rumblings in the trade press about the brutal way in which some of the Hodder people were dispatched. Hely Hutchinson says this was done in a

generous and civilised way, but says changes were needed at Hodder.

"Fiction is very much a big publishers' game, because of the potential of some authors to require considerable investment. In order to compete with other leading fiction publishers, you have to be able to market your book in every supermarket, every airport, in the territories for which you are responsible. You have to be very comfortable with dealing with retailers who have the option of putting broccoli where your book is going. Tweedy gentlemen are not very good at dealing with a person who may have been switched from the poultry the day before."

Oh, those tweedy gentlemen. If you were writing the novel of Hely Hutchinson's life, he would have to come up from humble origins driven by ambition and a huge chip on his shoulder. In fact his father, now chairman of the company, is the Earl of Donoughmore and he comes to publishing via Eton and Magdalen, Oxford. So much for stereotypes.

He describes himself as "a jack-of-all trades, running a company which in some ways could be any sort of business — it's about money, buildings and people."

"Probably the most important part of my job is that I try to lead the publishing strategy. I can't make all the decisions myself, in terms of reading manuscripts,

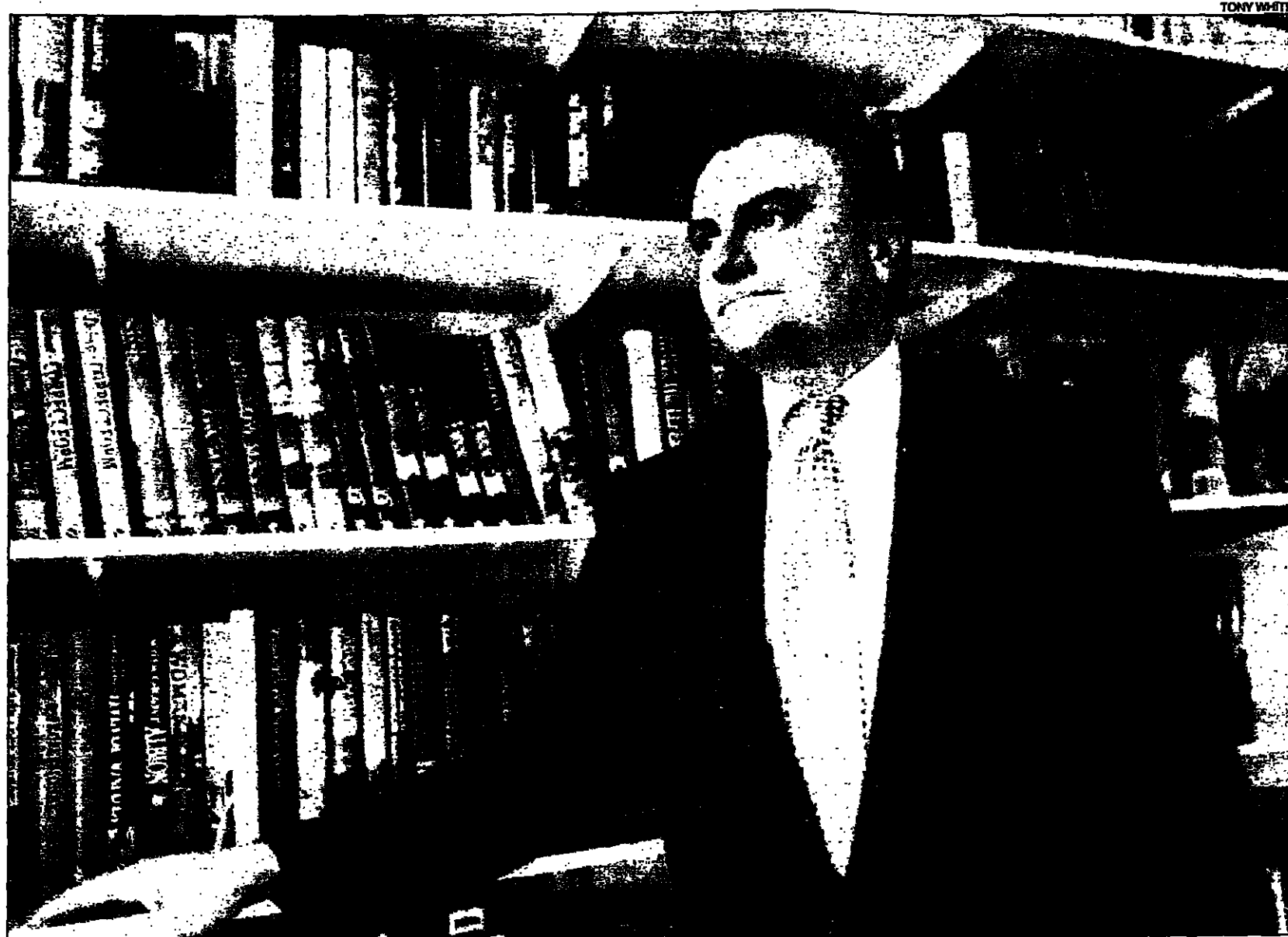
There is no such thing as a bad popular novel

seeing authors, and suggesting marketing initiatives." This requires meeting the publishers within the various divisions of Hodder Headline, fiction, children's books, whatever, at least twice a month and thrashing out what sort of books should be produced. Hely Hutchinson has his own small personal stable of authors, mainly the bestsellers such as John le Carré, and his publishers are encouraged to send up to him anything that particularly excites them.

The latest discovery is one Jenn Crowell, a 17-year-old American, whose *Necessary Madness*, a novel of modern relationships, is published in the spring. "The author will tour — in between her exams," he says drily.

It is a curious, mangle business, publishing. Although a firm as big as Hodder Headline has a defined list of fiction, the mainstay of the business, which attempts to ensure the various sub-categories and genres are covered, there is no accounting for the serendipitous outsider. Take *Waterhouse Down* — not a Hodder Headline book. Publishers were not exactly falling over themselves two decades ago to sign up a book about talking rabbits. Now there is an entire sub-genre of talking badgers, talking foxes...

One of Hely Hutchinson's biggest authors is Ellis Peters, whose Brother Cadfael books about a 12th century monk have been televised. The author only ever had one unsuccessful paperback sale before he took her on. The books were detective stories, but also historical novels. As the latter is not a sufficiently



Tim Hely Hutchinson is probably the most prominent of the new breed of publishers for whom the bottom line is more important than the Booker Prize

defined genre, the book had to be marketed as the former — except for all that historical detail.

"I was saying, these are very good books and they deserve a paperback publisher. We were heading down a blind alley, tempted to downplay the medieval atmosphere — then along came Umberto Eco and *The Name of the Rose*, and we suddenly realised that was the unique selling point, not a problem to bury."

There is now, naturally, an entire sub-genre of historical detectives. The story illustrates how the fortunes of a book can be transformed both by luck and by good marketing. But there is little that can be done without the books to sell. The public perception is that the perfect author is one who explodes like a star-shell, selling millions of his or her first book and then retiring to Barbados for all the publisher cares. Not so, he says; consistency of product and a long career can be as important, which is why authors are signed on multi-book deals.

"The publicity spend will very seldom be justified by the sale of one book. You can only justify it by building a brand." Given that launching a potential best-seller can cost up to £1 million in total, including the author's slice, this is hardly

surprising. The payback comes from subsequent books, if the writer takes off, and the backlist of titles already published.

"We're looking primarily for professional writers, people who earn their living from writing. The first prerequisite is actual craftsmanship, which is very underrated. People talk about thrillers as pulp fiction. If they have read as many thrillers as I have, they wouldn't call it that. Then you are looking at something else on top."

Some writers come to the end of their

road, having written all they can — comic novelists are particularly prone to this, because jokes tend not to bear repeating. Sometimes a divorce is necessary.

"It's very, very rare to cancel a contract — it's something that's frowned upon here. It's more likely that towards the end of the contract you don't renew."

But what if that writer then goes on to find success with another publisher? "I've lived in fear of it," he says, "but I've never seen somebody we've let go climb into the bestseller list for somebody else."

He claims there is no such thing as a bad popular novel. "It's almost a tautology — it has to have some appealing element, some special attraction to the reading public." At this stage we pass gently over the publishing phenomenon that is

Jeffrey Archer. Hely Hutchinson persists: "In the 1960s and 1970s, and probably into the 1980s, there was this perception of an extremely sharp divide between commercial fiction and literary fiction. Literary snobbishness is destructive. The fact is that every single novel that has survived, that is a classic, was written by a popular novelist. It's not in our culture here to be snobbish. We're really trying to find books the public will like. The biggest competition is getting good authors in the 'first place'."

So, thus encouraged, your budding author makes it alive across the Euston Road traffic with the precious manuscript. What is the first thing you look for? "It helps if somebody's first novel is not about themselves," Hely Hutchinson says drily.

HIDDEN ASSETS

Scarcroft Lodge provides all the creature comforts

Privatised utility, multinational manufacturer, specialist services boutique... whatever you are, there is a certain flush of pride to be found in being able, at industry dinners, to drop the names of the listed buildings that nestle fetchingly among your assets. Being able to name a full-blown country house as your corporate headquarters is even better.

In this, Yorkshire Electricity is lucky. All round, in fact, the board members of the company have had it pretty good since privatisation. Their only concern on the distant horizon seems to be the vague threat of competition. But its senior executives can console themselves with the thought that they have heritage on their side in the form of a listed country house as their headquarters. Yorkshire Electricity's Scarcroft Lodge is a fine

Joanna Pitman delves into the past of Yorkshire Electricity's headquarters

Georgian mansion built by a Quaker stuff merchant (wool merchant) called Newman Cash, who came to Leeds from Coventry in 1815 and found that his business flourished once he had begun trading with America. By 1826 the successful Mr Cash had decided the time had come to establish himself properly, with an appropriate estate. He bought an extensive tract of land on Scarcroft Moor near Collingham, just outside Leeds, and by 1830 he had created a handsome pillared mansion of an appropriate grandeur to establish himself socially.

In 1852 the estate was bought by Robert Tennant, a successful Leeds solicitor and a captain of the Yorkshire Hussars. He increased

the size of the estate, created an ornamental lake and enlarged the house. The Earl of Mexborough bought it in 1888, carried out some refurbishments and installed his daughter, Lady Mary Savile, in residence. Lady Mary converted the picture gallery into a ballroom and also had a small private Catholic chapel built in the clock tower.

When she moved to Essex in the 1920s, Albert Braithwaite, a former mayor of Leeds, moved in. He modernised the building, improved the grounds and installed a grand stained glass window bearing the arms and motto of the Braithwaite family.

Mr Braithwaite sold Scarcroft Lodge in 1938 to a

local businessman, Oliphant J. Philipson. However, no sooner had Mr Philipson bought it than the building was requisitioned for use as a convalescent hospital.

After the war he sold the estate to the Yorkshire Electric Power Company. When the electricity supply industry was nationalised in 1948, the estate passed to the Yorkshire Electricity Board, which continued to use it as its headquarters.

During the 1950s, YEB extended the house, building a canteen and new offices on the site of the old stable courtyard, and a new office block to occupy half of the old Italian garden. In the 1970s it added a purpose-built office block.

Over the years the focus of YEB's office requirements drifted to its newer buildings and the original lodge became neglected. But when Scarcroft Lodge was named a Grade II listed building in 1975, attention was diverted back to the 1830s building and YEB instigated repairs and renovation.

Conference facilities have been installed, and with privatisation and the resulting centralisation of personnel, more office accommodation has been created. The refitted lodge was reopened in 1993.

Graham Hall, group executive director, is triumphant in his stewardship of a listed country house. He also points out that the fireplace from the ballroom has found its way to the Victoria & Albert Museum. You can be fairly sure that Scarcroft Lodge will not be neglected again under its current ownership.



Home, sweet home: Scarcroft Lodge became a Grade II listed building in 1975

Northern Electric Shareholders

650p
CASH

CE Electric's final* offer deadline is 1.00pm on Friday 20th December.

Because of Christmas post delays, we suggest that if you are posting your forms of acceptance you do so at least 3-4 days before the close of the final offer. If you have any questions about completing the forms call

0117 975 1595



CE Electric UK plc

*The Final Offer will not be increased and will not be extended beyond 1.00 pm, on Friday 20 December 1996, unless the Final Offer has been accepted or has been declared unsuccessful as to acceptances. However, CE Electric reserves the right to increase, extend or otherwise revise the Final Offer, or either of them, until the close of the Final Offer or the earlier event of a compulsory takeover as determined by the Panel. The shareholders of CE Electric UK plc, the members of the executive committee of Callaghy Company Ltd, and the members of the executive committee of Peter Kew & Son, Ltd, accept responsibility for the information contained in this advertisement and, to the best of their knowledge and belief, having taken all reasonable care to ensure that such is the case, the information contained in this advertisement is published on behalf of CE Electric UK plc and has been approved by CE Electric UK plc and has been approved by CE Electric UK plc and has been approved by CE Electric UK plc. This advertisement is published on behalf of CE Electric UK plc and has been approved by CE Electric UK plc and has been approved by CE Electric UK plc. Limited is acting for CE Electric UK plc, Callaghy Company, Ltd, and Peter Kew & Son, Ltd, in relation to the Final Offer and will not be responsible to anyone other than CE Electric UK plc, Callaghy Company, Ltd, and Peter Kew & Son, Ltd, for providing the information contained in this advertisement or for providing advice or opinions in relation to the Final Offer.

STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Mystery buyers put CU back in the limelight

COMMERCIAL UNION, a favourite takeover candidate, was one of only 21 constituents of the FT-SE 100 index to rise yesterday after one investor paid over the odds for a large line of shares, prompting another flurry of speculative activity.

By the close of business the price had climbed 21p to 665p in a falling market and now stands just 12 1/2p below its peak for the year. In late trade on Thursday another investor paid 5p over the ruling market price at that time for a line of 250,000 shares.

This sparked suggestions that a potential bidder had begun building up a stake in the company just prior to making a move. The same old names were doing the rounds with Allianz, the German insurer, leading a pack that also included BAT Industries, down 3p at 490 1/2p.

In the past Allianz has always refused to comment on market speculation. A total of 5.22 million shares had changed hands by the close.

Other insurers lost ground along with the rest of the market. General Accident finished 12 1/2p down at 688p, Guardian Royal Exchange 4p at 261p, and Royal Sun Alliance 5 1/2p at 425 1/2p. But among the insurance brokers Sedgwick put on 5 1/2p at 126 1/2p amid talk that a bid might be on the way.

Elsewhere share prices spent another nervous day in the wake of a near 100-point fall in the Dow Jones industrial average and volatility on Far East markets overnight. At one stage the FT-SE 100 index plunged 56.8 points, anxiously awaiting the start of trading again in New York.

Early indications suggested a further shakeout for the Dow of around 70 points. In the event, Wall Street tumbled more than 50 points in early trading, but quickly rebounded into positive territory by the time London closed. The FT-SE 100 eventually saw its deficit cut to just 18.3 at 3,972.4, a rise on the week of 9.4.

Selling pressure was easily contained with just 624 million shares changing hands. Northern Electric soared 39 1/2p to 642p after the Government decided against referring the bid from CE Electric, the American power company, to the Monopolies & Mergers Commission. Northern responded by continuing to urge shareholders to reject



Sean Kelly of PGA ETC, steady at 6p, nets BA deal

the increased offer, worth 650p a share. It drew comparisons with the recent offer for East Midlands Electricity, worth 745p a share, and complained that the terms from CE undervalued the business. Northern has already promised its shareholders dividends totalling almost £1 if it retains its independence.

East Midlands also climbed

at 370p. They have been replaced by Mercury Asset Management, down 9p at £122 1/2p, and Hays, 3p firmer at 537 1/2p.

Matthew Hall is another casualty of this week's reshuffle of the constituents, having lost its place among the top 250. It finished 10 1/2p down at 260p.

Orange, the mobile tele-

Keep an eye on Bradstock Group, the insurance and re-insurance broker, which has begun climbing off the bottom after seeing 54p. The price raised 1 1/2p to 61 1/2p yesterday in heavy turnover of 337,942 shares. Not bad considering market-makers will normally only make a price in 10,000 at a time.

30p to 656 1/2p, almost matching the terms of 670p a share being offered by Dominion Resources. But the rest of the Recs also went better on learning of the Government's decision. London Electricity put on 28p at 679 1/2p, Southern 27p at 774 1/2p and Yorkshire 13 1/2p at 756p.

Pilkington rallied 1p to 145p after losing its place this week as a constituent of the top 100 companies along with Courtaulds, another 3p lower

phone operator, added 2 1/2p at 181p. Increases to the tariffs for

callers using BT lines connecting

with Orange and One-2-10

are expected to provide a

substantial boost to revenues.

BT rose 3 1/2p to 390 1/2p.

PGA European Tour

Courses, steady at 6p, has

signed a marketing agreement

with British Airways offering

its 500,000 Executive Club

members 18 months membership

of its own International

Tour Club for the price of a

MOVERS OF THE WEEK

Current price	Week's change	Expansion plans
BAT Industries 490 1/2p	+39 1/2p	Launch delay
Digital Animation 679 1/2p	+28p	Profits boosted
Camco Engineering 210p	+15p	Profits boosted
RUB Mining 425p	+45p	RUB's broker downgrades profits
BBB Designs 456 1/2p	+17p	Neville Buch buys stake
Northern Electric 642p	+39 1/2p	CE Electric bid given go-ahead
Taylor Nelson AG 425p	+7 1/2p	Profits warning
Clubpartners 75p	+4p	Bid approach below market price
East Midlands Elec. 656 1/2p	+32 1/2p	Northern bid allowed to proceed

COMMODITIES

ICE-UK (London 6.00pm)

WHEAT (London 6.00pm)

Barley (London 6.00pm)

Spot CIF NW Europe (contract delivery)

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year. The International Tour Club offers playing rights at seven leading golf courses across Europe with a 30 per cent discount thrown in. Sean Kelly, managing director, said British Airways was an ideal marketing partner.

PGA owns Quinto do Lago in Portugal, Portmarnock in Ireland and Collingtree Park in this country. A speculation in the City suggests PGA ETC may be one of the front runners bidding for Clubpartners, the AIM-listed leisure group. Shares of Clubpartners fell 4p to 72p yesterday after warning that all the offers received had been pitched at a discount to the ruling market price. This follows the failure of Clubpartners to acquire the Drift Golf Club. At these levels Clubpartners is valued at £3.16 million.

A boardroom bust-up failed to undermine British Building & Engineering, unchanged at 43 1/2p. Robert Paine, chairman, has been asked to leave the company because of irreconcilable differences with the rest of the board. John Jessop, a non executive director, will take over as chairman until a permanent successor is found.

RJB Mining clawed back some of this week's losses with a rise of 27p at 425p as brokers took the view that the selling had been overdone after BZW, the company's own broker, had lopped a hefty £40 million from its forecast for 1997.

Q11-EDGED: After trading sideways for much of the day, bond prices around Europe put in a late spurt, cheered by the news that the European Union Ministers meeting in Dublin had agreed final details of the EMU stability pact.

Prices in London closed near the best of the day with the highest gains recorded among longer dated coupons.

In futures the March series of the long gilt closed £1 1/2 higher at £109 1/2, as the total number of contracts traded rose to 59,000. Treasury 8 per cent 2015 put on £1 1/2 at £102 1/2 while Treasury 8 per cent 2020 was five ticks firmer at £102 1/2.

IN NEW YORK: Shares on Wall Street were buffeted by a rapid series of program trades and by midday were mixed, with the Dow Jones industrial average 9.23 points higher at 6,312.94.

MAJOR PRICES

New York (midday):

Dow Jones 6312.94 (+9.23)

S&P Composite 728.23 (+1.18)

Tokyo:

Nikkei Average 2041.39 (+159.81)

Hong Kong:

Hang Seng 12794.07 (+269.21)

Amsterdam:

EOE Index 606.65 (+4.78)

Sydney:

AO 2316.5 (+23.1)

Frankfurt:

DAX 2799.71 (+7.37)

Singapore:

Strait 2179.14 (+3.41)

Brussels:

General 1022.72 (+7.30)

Paris:

CAC-40 2203.41 (+8.78)

Zurich:

SKA Gen 824.60 (+3.30)

London:

FT 30 2738.3 (+17.4)

FT 100 3972.4 (+18.3)

FTSE Mid 250 4358.3 (+21.2)

FTSE 100 3972.4 (+18.3)

FTSE Eurotrack 100 1832.2 (+5.4)

FT All-Share 1946.17 (+4.08)

FT Non Financials 2028.09 (+7.18)

FT Financials 115.64 (+4.59)

FT Govt Secs 93.71 (+0.02)

Bargains 31246

SEAQ Volume 624,648

US\$ (London) 1.9077 (+0.0008)

US\$ 1.6580 (5m/6m)

German Mark 2.3641 (+0.0003)

Exchange Index 93.2 (+0.1)

Bank of England official rate 4.00%

ECU 1.1857

LSOR 1.1467

RPI 153.9 Nov (2.7%) Jan 1997 +100

RPI 153.7 Nov (3.3%) Jan 1997 +100

RECORDED

Access Plus (50) 100%

Advanced Power Cn 79%

Archer Dedicated 100%

Britt Alcott 137%

Cadence 237%

Car Group 169%

Chatterbox Cms (S) 5%

Dawn Tilt Dust 121%

Druid Grp 316%

Easter Inv 97%

Finbury Int Hedge 61%

Future Int Tel (115) 125%

Granite Hldgs 127%

Kern Bvst 50%

Kier Group 183%

Oliver Ashworth 131%

Oxford Biomedical 47%

Parkwood Holdings 78%

Provent (125) 120%

Recycling Servs 78%

Rock Business Sys 170%

Scot Highland Hds 138%

Second St David Inc 110%

Second St David 2 P 184%

Sempie Cochrane 214%

Yeoman Group 170%

ALLIED COLL n/p (118) 6%

Aukett Assoc n/p (5) 1%

Avian n/p (620) 1%

Bloomcombs n/p 235%

Bodycorp Int n/p 139%

INVESTCO UT n/p (230) 28%

More Group n/p (600) 9%

Regallan Props n/p (30) 1%

MAJOR CHANGES

RISES:

FI Group 489p (+19p)

Com Union 685p (+21p)

Ry Bk Scot 587p (+10p)

Scotia 812p (+10p)

FALLS:

MAID 214 1/2p (-12p)

Prism Rail 450p (-25p)

Real Time 2300p (-12p)

Wheeler Clark 2500p (-10p)

Wolesey 428p (-14p)

Farscape 375p (-12p)

Closing Prices Page 33

TEMPUS

Short-circuited bid

CE ELECTRIC has won over Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, and in so doing has removed any coherence left in government competition policy. Will Northern Electric investors be so easily bowled over? With only one week left of the offer period, the battle will be hard fought.

Northern will rely on its promised special dividends and a defence package promising a lift in 1998's dividend and a supply-side tie-up with another regional electricity company. It will further argue that CE Electric had relied on real market fears of referral to offer a price that undervalues Northern.

Both bidder and target have been arming themselves. Northern appears to have the backing of at least two major institutions and a substantial proportion of small shareholders. CE Electric holds just under 30 per cent of

the shares and has acceptances for another four per cent. It will argue that Northern is still a risky stock, threatened by Labour's windfall tax and a quixotic regulator.

The votes of small investors who own about 20 per cent of the company could be decisive. Many are loyal to Northern by dint of local association and will add an interesting dynamic to the battle, as Northern cannot put too much faith in hearsay over walls. Moreover, the electricity sector has been a playground for risk arbitrage funds, speculating on bids. Such short-term players are likely to sell into any sign of share price strength.

Northern can claim it has delivered value, having paid out more than £5 per share in dividends since 1994 with £2.50 promised to the year 2000. But there is little doubt that without bids, the sector has a dull outlook.

British Airways

CRIS of "shame" greeted British Airways when HM Government waved through the proposed tie-up with American Airlines. The conditions attached — the disposal of 168 slots — were so onerous that BA will barely suffer at all. The airline can offer up any slot as long as it is capable of being used by a transatlantic carrier and BA could end up franchising some of its routes.

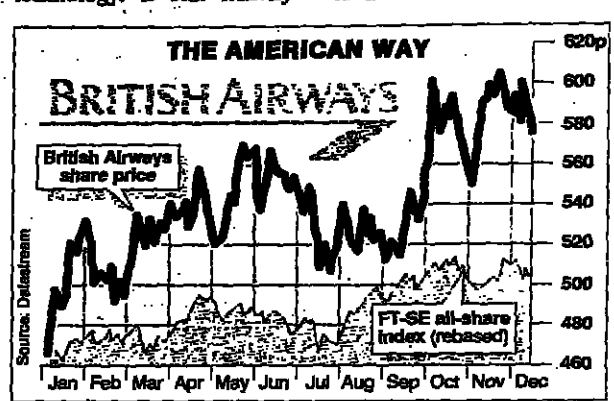
Predictably, other airlines bluster and BA still has the European Commission and American regulators to contend with. Yet, it would be bizarre for the Americans to attempt to halt consolidation in this fragmented industry. Indeed, they started the process, and only last week the US airline industry was agog with talk of a much bigger merger. Delta and Continental

the third and fifth largest carriers, are said to be considering — a combination that would create the world's biggest airline. Such a deal would create a monster with \$18 billion in revenues, but both parties have opposed the BA/American tie-up.

The truth is that air transport, for all its glamour and technology, is still heavily

subsidised, poorly managed and with few barriers to entry. There is no shortage of tycoons prepared to risk it all on an ageing 747 in order to sell us discounted tickets to Miami.

The public interest would be better served by more aggressive health and safety regulation and less commercial interference.



Cable

THE CABLE industry has turned into a two-horse race. Taking the inside lane is Cabletel General, which is publicly traded on the London Stock Exchange. Diamond and KPN are all candidates. General, recently in talks with TeleWest, is the most attractive. Investors should either wait to buy CWC shares or take a punt on General. It will take time before TeleWest puts together enough pieces to form a coherent strategy.

CWC is the front-runner in the race for profitability. Putting Nyx, Bell and Videotron together will create savings and give CWC considerable clout to negotiate cheaper deals with programme suppliers. Mercury, meanwhile, can dip into the cable companies for extra revenue by selling their customers international phone services.

TeleWest is not out of the running but needs some as-

sistance. Buying, or merging with, one or more of the few remaining cable companies will probably be its first move.

Cabletel General, which is publicly traded on the London Stock Exchange, is the most attractive. Investors should either wait to buy CWC shares or take a punt on General. It will take time before TeleWest puts together enough pieces to form a coherent strategy.

Stock Exchange

IF THERE ever was a reason for the Stock Exchange to switch from a trading system based on rival price quotations to one that is order driven, it has faded into obscurity as rapidly as TradePoint, Throgmorton Street's supposedly terrifying rival.

The latest draft rules for the new system, due in October, confirm that market-makers will not give up

lucrative privileges lightly. Publication delays, left tactfully vague before, should still allow any £1 million principal deal to be delayed

at least a week, and, furthermore, unspecified, conditions for big block trades and the like will remain.

This is politically incorrect and will raise the usual howls from self-interested disclosure purists. But it looks like common sense: there is a tension between transparency and liquidity. It should also pass muster with the Securities and Investments Board, since it will at least maintain the much sharper disclosure standards brought in after SIB's equity market review.

In post-revolutionary Britain, some people now also realise how difficult it is, in the name of pure theory, to give up London's liquidity advantages over continental bourses that are panting to take its business.

EDITED BY CARL MORTISHED

LIFE

COCA-Cola

Dec 1996 670.000 Mar 1997 695.000

Dec 1996 670.000 Mar 1997 695.000

Dec 1996 670.



DECOR-AUCTIONS 29

Some ghosts of Christmas past under the hammer

WEEKEND MONEY

HAPPY RETURNS 30

A revival for the private rental market



THE TIMES: PERSONAL FINANCE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

Analysts see smoother ride in long term

Marianne Curphey and Caroline Merrell on whether the FT-SE's bull run is over and the prospects for the UK stock market in 1997



Investors continued to suffer a rollercoaster ride on the London stock market yesterday as leading shares showed another unexpected fall.

Once again, jitters on Wall Street were to blame. Billions were wiped off the UK market's value as shares in blue-chip companies fell, dragging down the FT-SE 100 index 18 points to 3,979.4, after having been down nearly 57 points at lunchtime. The initial fall prompted fears that the market was about to see a repeat of the 185-point crash of a week ago.

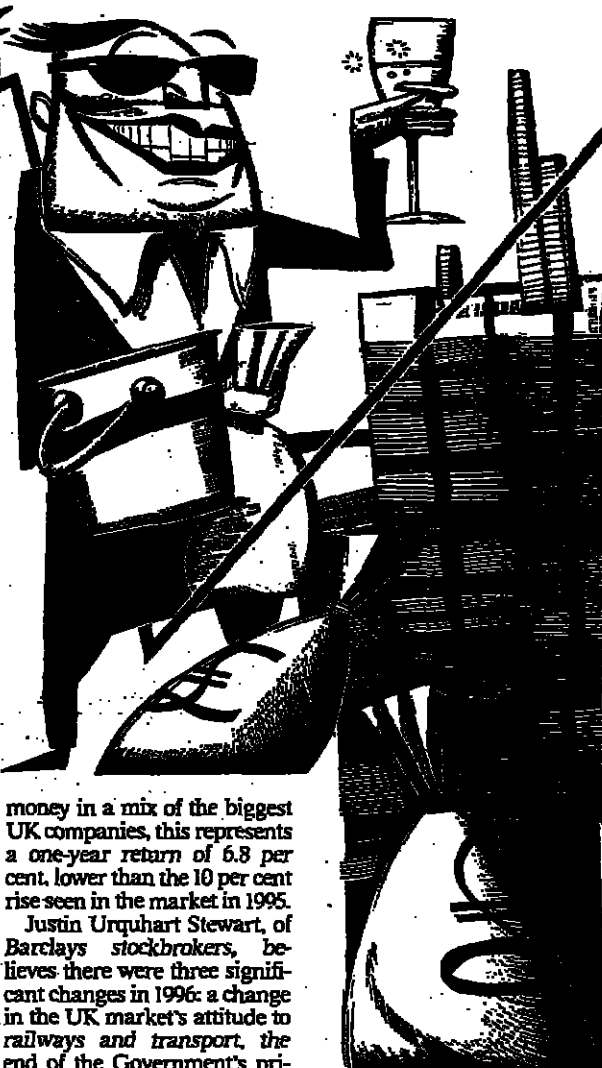
Among the casualties were the banking and pharmaceutical sectors. HSBC fell 14p to £12.32, Barclays fell 25p to £10.02, and Zeneca was down 10p to £16.07.

However, analysts believe the volatility is short-term and growth in the UK stock market should continue next year.

Anyone who invested in the UK stock market at the beginning of the year would have found their fortunes inextricably linked to the state of mind of Alan Greenspan, chairman of the US Federal Reserve. His warnings a week ago about the dangers of "irrational exuberance" in pushing share prices ever higher sent stock markets plunging amid fears that US interest rates would rise.

However, the FT-SE 100 recovered ground this week. At the start of this year, it was hovering around 3,689, and for the first half of the year the market showed little movement. Again it was taking the lead from Wall Street. Until July, there was a very real fear that the US would need an interest rate rise, but when the threat diminished the US and UK markets took off. Both broke records. The FT-SE 100 peaked on October 21 at 4,073 before falling to its current level.

For UK investors with their



money in a mix of the biggest UK companies, this represents a one-year return of 5.8 per cent, lower than the 10 per cent rise seen in the market in 1995.

Justin Urquhart Stewart, of Barclays stockbrokers, believes there were three significant changes in 1996: a change in the UK market's attitude to railways and transport, the end of the Government's privatisation campaign, and people's realisation that they could no longer rely on the State in their old age.

The first led to the successful privatisation of Railtrack and the market's enthusiasm for Stagecoach, the bus and train company. The second resulted in the rise in the share price of British Energy, the last privatisation before the general election next year.

The third meant that individual investors began to take a greater interest in saving for their old age.

Schroders, the investment

house, said that smaller companies had done better than their bigger rivals over the 12 months. Bridget Cleverly, head of marketing, said: "Growth stocks have definitely outperformed. The recent jitters have been caused by the US market being overvalued. Although this volatility will continue, from an economic point of view the UK is healthy. UK companies are not overvalued."

She believes that because UK pension funds have sold equities and increased their cash holdings, they will use any fall in the market as a



buying opportunity to pick up shares at bargain prices. She predicts that the UK market will end next year at around the 4,300 level.

Roger Cornick, sales director at Perpetual, also thinks that the FT-SE 100 will hit the 4,350 level by the end of 1997. The sectors he favours include the pharmaceutical companies and financial companies, both of which fell yesterday but which many analysts believe offer the best opportunities for future growth.

Pharmaceuticals have historically performed well even during periods of political instability, which analysts say makes them a good defensive stock in a general election year.

Many observers believe the City has accepted the possibility of a Labour government, and built that into the price of shares. John Hatherly, M&G head of research, said: "Gordon Brown could be even more determined to keep down inflation."

However, Mr Urquhart Stewart believes the City will become increasingly nervous about a windfall tax on utility companies as the general election looms. Once the election is over, interest rates will rise no matter which party is running the country, he says. He predicts further consolidation in the telecoms and media sectors, and says that although retailers will have a good Christmas any increases in profit margins may not be sustainable throughout the rest of 1997.

At EZW, Steve Wright, UK equity strategist, names Stagecoach, up 124 per cent on the year, as the best stock of 1996 and expects its growth to continue next year.

ALLIANCE & LEICESTER CONVERSION

Members of the Alliance & Leicester Building Society have this week voted overwhelmingly in favour of the conversion proposals. As with other societies that have opted to demutualise, more than 90 per cent of those who voted were in favour of the proposals.

The society aims to float by April. Each qualifying member will get 250 shares worth about £1,000, depending on the stock market conditions at the time of the flotation. In order to qualify for the shares, saving members must ensure that they keep their accounts open until flotation, while borrowing members must ensure they have at least £100 worth of debt with the society.

However, the society, under Peter White, chief executive, still says the flotation could be delayed by proposals in the Building Societies Bill relating to societies' five-year protection from takeover. Under current proposals, it would only take a shareholder or shareholders holding 10 per cent of the capital to force the five-year protection to be dropped. This could then lead to a full takeover. The Treasury is reconsidering the Bill's draft proposals.



Savers hear glad tidings

Mortgage rates may be on the way up, but some good new year tidings are on the way for millions in the form of better savings rates.

This week, Halifax, Woolwich and Bradford & Bingley, joined the Abbey National, Nationwide, Coventry, and Northern Rock in raising mortgage rates, at the same time as increasing savings rates.

Woolwich, for instance, has put up savings rates by a maximum of 0.5 per cent. On its Prime Gold account, interest rates for those with under £500 has gone up from 0.75 per cent to 1 per cent. For those who have a little more to save, for example, between £5,000 and £9,999, the rate has increased from 2 to 2.25 per cent.

Nationwide also announced a raise in savings rates of 0.2 per cent, at the same time as increasing its mortgage rate for the second time in as many months. Balances of £2,000 will earn interest of 2.8 per cent, from the beginning of next year.

Bradford & Bingley is increasing its variable mortgage rate by 0.25 per cent to 6.99 per cent. Its savings rates are being increased by between 0.1 per cent and 0.45 per cent. The society claims it is putting the emphasis on the smaller saver. Those who have between £500 and £2,499 invested in the society's instant-access account will get interest of 2.85 per cent — 0.35 per cent higher than previously.

Halifax, the biggest building society in the UK, is waiting until the new year to announce rates.

WEEKEND MONEY is edited by Anne Ashworth

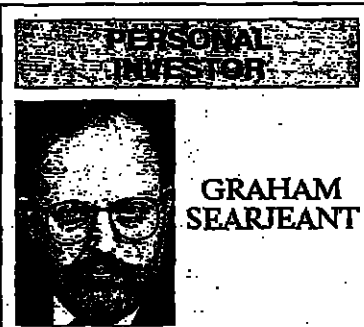
Harsh lesson for Northern

The concept of shareholder value, say bright-eyed analysts and fund managers, is spreading from the Anglo-Saxon countries to the Continent and Japan. The lesson is a little. Break-up bids, greenmailing, raiders demanding cash handouts, and leveraged deals that left businesses weighed down with debt, did much to weaken American industry in particular. It stymied investment, deterred innovation and made risk anathema.

In mature industries, however, there is much to be said for putting pressure on big company boards to work for their shareholders, rather than for the glory of the corporation. Too many boards saw their shareholders as just another source of financing, and a messy, expensive one at that. Some still do. If investors become demanding taskmasters, directors have to focus on the job and become more competitive.

This is truest for steady, low-growth businesses that produce more cash than they need. A balmy climate breeds complacency, but the big question is what to do with the cash. You can diversify, let someone else do it by being taken over, or pass cash to shareholders via dividends or one-off payments.

Diversification has a mixed record. Most of the objects of big break-up bids were good businesses that lost their way by moving into areas their skills were unsuited to, even if they seemed to be "related". So the choice is often to offer shareholders jam today or to find that a predator does. As soon as the Government lifted takeover protection, this



GRAHAM SEARJEANT

became the stark choice for Britain's regional utilities, especially cash-rich power distributors. The modest, decent regulated life envisaged at privatisation was no longer possible. Patient diversification, rarely a winner in any case, became yesterday's game.

The moment of truth came just two years ago, when Trafalgar House, a shaky conglomerate, launched a £1.2 billion hostile takeover bid for Northern Electric. Like other regional electricity companies, Northern had been sold at £2.40 a share four years earlier. Trafalgar offered a seemingly munificent £10.40 a share plus.

Northern's board soon discovered the concept of shareholder value. The result was astonishing. It was able to offer its shareholders a £560 million package of cash special dividends and securities reckoned to be worth £5.07 a share, plus a promise of higher dividends. This included the company's share of National Grid, which did not turn out to be

worth quite as much when floated. Chiefly, however, Northern calculated that it could operate with far more debt and still raise annual dividends if it axed investment in diversifications.

This package saw off Trafalgar. But some dubious analysts thought it a risky scorched earth policy. Not so. Northern fulfilled its promises. When another unwanted bid came from the unimpressive CE Electric consortium, the scorched earth turned out to be an allotment. Northern has grown another crop of shareholder value, from earlier investments that have matured. Having cut its debt, it can offer another 17 per cent rise in dividends next year, with more promised in future.

Northern also seems to be prospering on a low-fat diet. It has started to exploit the opportunities brought by competition as brightly as any and has more schemes to cut costs. The company is a good advertisement for maximising cash returns to shareholders.

With notable exceptions, fund managers seem unimpressed. Northern shares languished well below CE Electric's latest 650p bid until it was waved through the MMC yesterday. They now trade just below the offer, worth some £790 million, where they yield a prospective 9.6 per cent. That seems cheap for a company so dedicated to shareholders' wishes. If the high priests of shareholder value do throw their most assiduous servant to the dogs, others will know that the cult, after all, just cloaks a greed for cash.

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The strain of obtaining treatment

Check small print on alternative medicine, says Helen Pridham

A growing number of private medical insurers are including some form of cover for complementary medicine within their policies. They are responding to the growing popularity of treatments such as osteopathy, chiropractic, acupuncture and homeopathy.

However, prospective policyholders need to look very carefully at exactly who the "gatekeepers" are that will determine access to these therapies under the policies as well as the amount of benefit provided. Some insurers make it much more difficult than others to get treatment under their plans.

One group of policyholders are immediately excluded from cover for any complementary treatment. The over-65s who receive tax relief on their insurance premiums cannot receive benefits for alternative therapies under

their policies. The Inland Revenue provides relief for policies which cover mainstream medical treatment only.

Even if you are covered you will normally be able to claim for complementary medicine only if you have been referred by a conventional doctor. Some insurers will accept referral by your GP. They include Legal & General, PPP Healthcare, WPA and Prime Health.

These companies argue that seeing the GP first is in the patient's own interest in case he or she has a serious medical problem which may go unrecognised by a complementary practitioner. But other companies, including Bupa and Cigna, will only pay for treatment if you are referred by a specialist.

Bupa stipulates that the treatment must be "an essential part of an overall course of treatment given personally by



Under some insurance policies, obtaining payment for complementary medicine such as osteopathy can be a sore point

the consultant". Stephen Walker of Medical Insurance Services of Brighton said: "The snag with policies that require referral by a specialist is that

not only must you be first referred to the specialist by your GP but there are still plenty of specialists who regard practitioners of comple-

mentary medicine as quacks." Othra, the Dutch-owned insurer, appears to be the only company that will pay for treatments without referral,

subject to a limit of 12 sessions per year to a maximum of £30 per session under its Medios policy, and £50 a session under its Executive 2000 plan.

WHO'S WHO IN ALTERNATIVES

Acupuncture: This treatment involves stimulating key points on the body, often by inserting needles.

Chiropractic: Here, a practitioner uses hands to manipulate bones and joints focusing particularly on the spine and central nervous system.

Homeopathy: Treatment involves "treating like with like", giving small doses of remedies made from natural products to produce symptoms very like those already being suffered.

Osteopathy: Osteopaths use their hands to diagnose the cause of pain and also for treatment using manipulative techniques.

Taken from *Legal & General's guide to acupuncture, chiropractic, homeopathy and osteopathy*, which is available free by telephoning 0800 393542

Lerisse Smith cautions against changing a motor policy too early

Thrifty drivers face reversal of fortune

Motor insurers are responding to an increasingly competitive market by locking customers into year-long insurance deals. A survey by *The Times* of some of the United Kingdom's biggest insurers has revealed a number of them charge penalty fees if clients pull out of their first year annual premium.

The practice makes it more difficult — and more expensive — for motorists to shop around for the cheapest cover. The Consumers Association, which has conducted its own research, says some insurers have trimmed costs by cutting the frills out of their policies and it is important for people to check exactly what cover they are buying.

A spokeswoman said customers should allow plenty of time before the renewal date on their existing policy to get alternative quotes. The penalties arise if customers cancel their motor insurance policies before the end of the first 12-month premium period.

Companies have defended the fee by saying acquisition costs such as staff time and administration work justify their action and they expect customers to honour contracts.

Direct Line, the largest motor insurer in the United Kingdom with more than two million motor policyholders, and the Automobile Association, which insures about 900,000 motorists, charge a fee on a percentage basis in the first year of a premium. From the second year onwards, policyholders get their money refunded on a pro-rata basis.

Adrian Webb, a spokesman for Direct Line, said that, when a customer took out a policy, it was for a one-year contract and there were acquisition costs involved in signing up a policyholder.

"Ultimately, you have to run a business," he said. "It is unfair on everybody else if someone cancels."

If a policyholder with Direct Line with an average premium of £250 cancelled after four months, they would be charged £120. The fee ranges from 25 per cent of the total premium after one month, to 100 per cent of it after nine months. Mr Webb said the fee would be waived if someone died.

Rebecca Hadley, of AA Insurance Services, also agreed that insurance companies had the right to cover their costs if someone cancelled within the first year. She added that, if a client had been with the company for a long time, then money would be paid out on a pro-rata basis. "We make it clear in the policy



Crunch-time: After an accident, trying to change companies may be expensive

documents. What we do is relatively common in the marketplace."

The RAC, which has about 300,000 motor insurance policyholders with its insurance service section, refunds all premiums on a pro-rata basis. Ms Shirley Jones, RAC public relations manager, said that she knew some insurers who did charge customers cancellation fees.

"Inevitably, some companies would make a charge. Most companies have annual renewal bases. There is bound to be an administration charge but I would not expect it to be excessive. "Maybe people who want to change to another company can ask their original one to match the price. Most insurance companies like you to be loyal."

Ms Jones said most insurance companies expected their customers to fulfil the year's premium and it was unreasonable to think a company should give back money if, for example, someone signs up with another one because it was £50 cheaper.

She added that it was reasonable to make some sort of charge. "It's like mortgages — penalty clauses exist for early redemption. It (the fee charged by

the motor insurance companies) isn't by all means harsh. The motor insurance industry is a cut-throat marketplace. There is a lot to be said about loyalty. After two to three years they (the companies) might make some money out of the clients."

However, one *Weekend Money* reader encountered problems when he bought a new car and decided his current insurer was not offering a competitive enough deal on the vehicle insurance.

He cancelled his policy six months into the contract, and asked for a full claims record. However, he was charged a fee and had to make repeated requests for a no-claims record to send to his new insurer. "They put obstacles in your way and generally make life difficult," he said.

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SCOTTISH WIDOWS

Spice up information on pensions

The Spice Girls believe that the nation will have tax and monetary union on its mind on polling day. Perhaps because of their youth, the girl band members do not mention pensions as an election issue. But for millions of voters of all ages this will be an important area.

Both the Government and the Opposition make much of their wish to see the populace make proper provision for its old age. As yet, however, there has been no coherent planning to ensure that people invest a sufficient amount and are properly informed as to how their funds are performing.

Those with personal pensions discover only with difficulty whether or not they have chosen a chart-topping company because crucial details, such as persistency figures, remain insider knowledge.

As skillfully managed entertain-



COMMENT

ANNE ASHWORTH
Personal Finance Editor

ers, expertly advised on their finances, the Spice Girls are unlikely to be placing their pension savings with Aegon Life, Albany Life, Barclays Life, Britannic Assurance, Cooperative Insurance Society, Cornhill, Guardian Financial Services, Irish Life, Lincoln National, MGM Assurance, Old Mutual, Reliance Mutual, Royal Life and Sun Alliance.

All these insurance companies scored close to or less than 70 per

cent on the latest pension plan persistency figures. Persistency, increasingly seen as a crucial measure, indicates how many policyholders surrender their plans in the early years.

Low persistency suggests that a company is more concerned with its own sales figures than with ensuring that policyholders get suitable pensions. Arguably, low persistency indicates generally poor standards. The Personal In-

vestment Authority, the industry watchdog, concedes that the persistency figures need improvement. But this will not happen until companies are forced to reveal their persistency chart rankings to potential customers. A cause for an ambitious politician?

Halifax hangs back

INVESTORS at societies becoming banks next year have suffered meagre returns. But the end may be in sight for Halifax customers, at least. Although other societies going to the stock market in 1997 have already revealed their savings rate changes, the Halifax is hanging back, waiting for smaller institutions to show their hand. It seems that, as conversion draws nearer, the society wants to make sure its savers do not all take flight after receiving their conversion payouts.

Gavin Lumsden says baubles and tinsel may hold real value

Xmas decor-auctions



A nodding Father Christmas advertising figure that reached £460 at Christie's auction of dolls, automata and Christmas on Thursday, indicating the demand from collectors for quality Christmas memorabilia

If this weekend finds you scrambling around a dusty attic or that cupboard under the stairs in the annual hunt for the Christmas decorations, take care. That dusty box of tired tinsel and bashed-up nativity figures could be a treasure trove.

Christie's, Bonhams and Phillips, the London auctioneers, say that prices for Christmas memorabilia are soaring. A turn-of-the-century Christmas card recently sold for £200, and a shop-display Father Christmas from the same period went under the hammer for more than £1,000.

A 1950s German nodding Santa Claus took pride of place at an auction of dolls and Christmas decorations at Christie's last Thursday. The electronically operated one-and-a-half foot figure fetched £460.

Germany is the source of many of the Christmas items turning up at auction. The country pioneered many of the yuletide traditions we recognise today. These travelled to this country when Prince Albert married Queen Victoria in 1840.

However, the Christie's sale did have one quintessentially British piece, a pre-Second World War Father Christmas Staffordshire teapot.

A sale devoted to Victorian Christmas cards held earlier in the week at Bonhams naturally demonstrated greater British involvement, as this was the first country to get serious about sending messages by post. Unusual cards are deemed valuable, with those featuring a distinctive Santa commanding a particularly high premium.

Don't smash the tree lights in a fury if they don't work first time — they, too, could be getting old and expensive to replace. The earliest hand-blown lights appeared in 1882 and were in use in the White

House in Washington DC 13 years later. Carbon and tungsten filaments took over at the start of the century, only to be superseded by bubble lights after the Second World War. Mazda made a series of Disney lights in the 1950s and 1960s. The Mickey Mouse edition of 24 bulbs burnt a modest £40 in someone's pocket at auction recently.

Don't be embarrassed if you own an artificial tree — that silver-coloured piece of tack could be an investment if you hold on to it long enough, even if you bought it for couple of pounds at Woolworth.

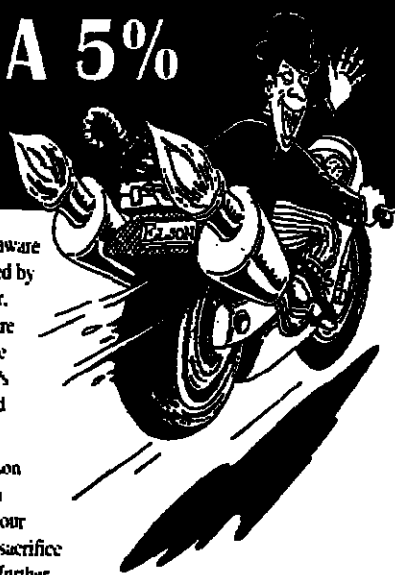
The first artificial trees sprouted in Germany after the First World War and were made from dyed goose and turkey feathers. Reproductions of these are now being made, so be careful if you think you find one in a

shop. Most were tiny but some stretched to a realistic six feet and are now worth thousands of pounds if in good condition. Of course, there is a downside to all this value — insurance cover.

Clare Parry of Nordstern, the specialist art and antique insurer, said: "Christmas is a great time for raiding the attic in search of dressing-up costumes, decorations and toys. People bring their family treasures out as part of the familiar ritual, completely unaware that these items, Victorian, pre-war and even post-war, have a monetary value too."

Nordstern will include valuable Christmas memorabilia, as well as your wine collection and more traditional objects d'art and antiques as part of a general house and contents insurance. A £500 premium should cover around £100,000.

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Christmas Day? Why not ring the bank manager?

The telephone banking industry is poised for its busiest week of the year as shoppers arrange overdrafts and customers sort out their finances before the start of the festive season.

First Direct, which offers 24-hour telephone banking, expects 25,000 calls on Christmas Eve, 12,000 on Christmas Day and 8,000 on Boxing Day. Most calls are to arrange an overdraft, check a balance and pay a bill, although customers are keen to instruct in share dealing, ask about foreign exchange and deal with thefts of cards from wallets or the aftermath of house burglaries.

Peter Simpson, First Direct's commercial director, said many customers had started to call from restaurants in the early hours of the morning to increase their credit card limit. "Another very typical request is for last-minute finance to polish off the Christmas shopping—whether it is a loan, or an overdraft," he said.

Last year, First Direct took 120 calls from customers on Christmas Day who just rang to say "Happy Christmas". The bank has found that customers are spending 30 per cent more on their credit cards and expects demand for personal loans to increase by 50 per cent in January when people start to pay off the bills.

MARIANNE CURPHEY

Marianne Curphey on growth in the rented property sector

Window of opportunity

The private rental market is recovering from its *Rising Damp* image and is showing signs of a genuine revival, according to a new report. The gross return for landlords on a property is now close to 10 per cent compared with the dividend yield on general utilities of 5.4 per cent and on gas of 8 per cent, according to the report by UBS, the Swiss bank.

Rob Thomas, housing analyst, says the private rental industry has 2.3 million customers, gross assets of up to £150 billion and an annual turnover of up to £15 billion. Net investment has been close to £20 billion over the past seven years. However, it is still extremely fragmented and a large proportion of landlords are still private individuals with one or two properties.

The growth in the number of landlords is a result of the 1988 Housing Act, which deregulated rents and gave landlords support in law to evict troublesome or non-paying tenants, and the housing slump of the 1990s, which made home-ownership less appealing. Mr Thomas says there are political risks for investors in the private rented market, but these have been exaggerated.

The greatest deterrent is the fear that Labour has not lost its traditional hostility towards private landlords. However, Mr Thomas believes all political parties now recognise that the country needs a thriving rental market.

He says the total cumulative return on residential property in the period 1982-95 was 293 per cent. This compares with 192 per cent for commercial property and 983 per cent for UK equities. In the years after the Second World War generous tax breaks on housing and incentives from successive Conservative governments for home-buyers meant the private rented sector shrank dramatically. At the turn of the century 90 per cent of the housing stock was rented, by 1940 the figure was 50 per cent and in 1989 just 9 per cent. Mr Thomas believes this figure is now 10



Times have changed since Leonard Rossier starred in *Rising Damp*

per cent and rising, and there are one million shorthold tenancies currently in force. The UK has one of the lowest proportions of privately rented housing among developed countries. In Switzerland the stock is 56 per cent and 30 per cent in the US.

The bulk of rented accommodation — 75 per cent — is owned by individuals with fewer than four houses. The tax incentives are not as great for businesses as private individuals. The sector includes 410,000 properties owned by companies to let to their employees. There are also a few publicly quoted companies, the best known of which is Bradford Property Trust. Before the 1990s, the private

rented sector catered primarily for students, older, poorer people on regulated rents and a small niche of very rich individuals.

Since the 1980s this group has widened to include people with negative equity who have been forced to move because of their jobs and are renting out their old home until property prices rise.

"Yields on private rented property have been rising since the start of the decade, reflecting both falling house prices and rising rent and driven by growing tenant demand," Mr Thomas says. He compares the investment in residential property with buying equi-

ties: both produce uncertain future income and capital values, with the prospect of rising income and capital gains. On the plus side, rents are inflation proof, tending to rise in real terms by about 2 per cent a year.

In April a new vehicle was introduced with some slight tax breaks — the Housing Investment Trust — which will invest in property to let. HITs have yet to be launched and demand for them is predicted to be muted. Those with sufficient funds can take advantage of low house prices and mortgage rates by buying a second property, but there are more liquid alternatives.

Investors could buy directly into companies quoted on the stock market which own and lease out residential property. Bradford Property Trust is the only big quoted company that does this: its portfolio is split 85 per cent residential to 15 per cent commercial property. Bradford edged pre-tax profits up 3 per cent to £25.6 million in the year to April 5.

Homes let under old-style regulated tenancies still account for about 80 per cent of Bradford's portfolio. Over the past 12 months its share price has been volatile: it rose last December from 180p to 220p, dipped in June and has recovered to just over 250p this month.

TR Property, managed by Henderson, buys properties, as well as shares and was the top performing property investment trust over the past 12 months, turning £1,000 invested into £1,349 in that period. Over the past 12 months Kleinwort 2nd Endowment Policy, a UK Capital Growth fund, has turned £1,000 into £1,346.

The alternative is a unit or investment trust, but many of these have portfolios weighted towards commercial property, which had a few bad years in the 1990s.

However, Ciaran Barr, UK economist with Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, believes house prices will have risen 10 per cent by the end of 1997.



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Retailers cashing in on the traditional pre-Christmas spending blitz are tentatively welcoming back the good times as shoppers seem more willing to part with hard-earned cash.

Asda, Sainsbury and Tesco, the big food groups, are opening selected stores 24 hours a day in a bid to make hay while consumer confidence continues to improve. Alders, the department stores group, reported the strongest growth in spending it has seen since the late Eighties this week, leading to a 72 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £40.4 million.

But talk of a consumer boom is premature. This week the British Retail Consortium (BRC) reported that retail sales growth slowed in November to its lowest rate of increase for seven months. However, the annual rise in the like-for-like value of retail sales is still 4.9 per cent, but down from its peak of 7 per cent in June.

The Office for National Statistics also reported last month that seasonally adjusted retail sales volumes were 4.1 per cent higher over the year to October. Nearly £13 billion passed through cash registers in October. The BRC

Jingling tills put retailers into the spotlight



says food and drink sales did particularly well last month as the stockpiling for the Yuletide festivities got under way. Another strong sector has been electrical goods, led by personal computers and computer games. This is good news for electrical retailers —

Comet, owned by Kingfisher, and Dixons, which owns Currys and PC World, the computer specialist. PC World had 30 per cent like-for-like growth in the year to last April and more is likely this year.

But Frank Davidson, food retailer analyst at James Capel, the broker, sees a tough time for high street grocers, such as Iceland, Kwik Save and Sainsbury, as Tesco, Sainsbury, Safeway and Asda continue to squeeze them on price and special promotions.

Archie Norman's Asda is particularly well-placed in the run-up to Christmas because it has a large range of non-food products, such as clothes and videos, attracting gift-hunters. It posts interim results next Thursday and Mr Davidson has pencilled in pre-tax profits of £154 million, compared with £138 million for the same period last year.

Asda is favourite stock among analysts. They like its strong, innovative marketing campaigns, such as a 10 per cent discount for pensioners during happy hour. Trading at a modest 5 per cent discount to the rest of the market, the stock should be at the top of investors' shopping lists.

MATTHEW WALL

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WEEKEND MONEY LETTERS

Annuities explained

From Mr A.J. Bowtell

Sir, I would like to try to answer some of the points raised by correspondents on the supposed "annuity inquiry" (Weekend Money Letters, November 30). I am an actuary working for a large life insurer who has been involved in the pricing of annuities.

The two main determinants of the price of an annuity are the yield (or interest rate) that is available on appropriate (medium to long-term) fixed-interest investments, and the mortality table assumed in the calculations. The mortality table, which is based on data obtained from the study of a large number of lives, predicts the number of survivors after 123... years from an initial population of a given age. In effect, the table gives the probability, for example, of a 50-year-old surviving to age 51, age 52, age 53 and so on.

The pricing of an annuity operates on normal insurance principles. The price of an annuity takes account of the probabilities of future survival and therefore payment. In effect, this means that the money paid by those who die soon after taking out their annuity, transfers to those who live longer. It does not fall as profit to the insurer.

There is one consequence of the above that should be explained to those considering deferring annuity purchase. If they defer purchase for say, five years, but die before that time elapses, then they will (in one sense) have gained from deferral. But if they survive the five years, when they do purchase their annuity they will have lost the benefit from pooling their risk five years earlier with other annuitants.

Insurance companies sell annuities at a price they consider will make a profit. The profit, however, is nothing like that suggested by some letters to Weekend Money. The annuities market is highly competitive and the expected profit, which will be realised only if annuitants live (and die) according to the mortality table, is usually of the order of 4 per cent of the purchase money. The mortality table, as referred to earlier, is based on past experience but allows for a continuing trend in mortality improvement, i.e. a continuing rise in life expectancy.

In fact, each time a review of past projections of annuitants' mortality is carried out it is found that actual improvements have been faster than anticipated. For example, we are already experiencing mortality that is lighter than that which, only a few years ago, was predicted for the year 2010. Annuity business has thus not been very profitable. Briefly, the idea that annuity providers can invest the purchase price so that the income from the investment pays the annuity and the capital goes to the insurer when the annuitant dies is false. Yours faithfully, A. BOWTELL, 65 Rances Lane, Wokingham, Berkshire.

Self-assessment shock awaits the complacent

From Mr D.J.S. Fuller

Sir, I would like to congratulate Anne Ashworth for the sentiments so adequately expressed in her comment (Self-assessment crucial for Kenneth, November 23).

I have been in practice as a chartered accountant for almost 25 years and have never experienced such apparent apathy on the part of the taxpayer. Part of this apathy must, I believe, be attributable to lack of awareness.

The taxpayers can create a fuss en-masse as we saw in the case of the poll tax, which it could be said, brought down a Prime Minister. Value-added tax was introduced so charismatically that the taxpayer could not help but know what it was, what it replaced, how it was calculated and how it would affect him.

Earlier this year, my colleagues and I agreed to hold a seminar specifically on the subject of self-assessment, for a local Chamber of Trade and Commerce, whose membership, comprising small- and large businesses, exceeds 100. We prepared information sheets to enable the attendees to supplement the knowledge they had acquired from us. In the event, the attendance was abysmal: significantly the attendees were bankers, lawyers, financial advisers and estate agents. At the time, we

attributed the poor attendance to the fact that the chamber membership were probably going to rely on their own accountants; however, subsequent discussions have brought us to the conclusion that very many, probably the majority of small businesses have not even considered the implications of self-assessment, let alone the fact that they should already have done something about it.

Further, but equally importantly, there are millions of individuals currently not represented by accountants who, in our view, will be utterly incapable of calculating their tax liabilities, and thus will incur penalties and surcharges. Many will not even look at their return until the deadline for obtaining Inland Revenue assistance in the calculation of liability has been passed.

I have spoken to many individuals who state that they do not submit an income tax return because the Inland Revenue does not send them one — they are not aware that it is their responsibility to obtain a Return: under self-assessment, it is their responsibility to obtain the correct Return.

It is now fairly apparent that the Government/Inland Revenue are continuing on the original course — thus there will be many unhappy individuals after January 1998.

Many professional firms and other organisations such as ourselves have set up departments and made arrangements to enable very small businesses and individuals to cope with self-assessment at a very limited cost — however, market research seems to indicate that the public do not know, do not care, and generally believe that "it will be all right on the night". It will not.

Whether the Government/Inland Revenue have yet done enough to create awareness is arguable; what is certain is that the publicity campaign must be stepped up very soon for the benefit of those millions of honest industrious taxpayers who have never knowingly committed an offence in the past, but may well, after January 1998, find, to their considerable cost they have been in default.

If your article did something to spread this awareness, then that is a good thing — however, the probability is that individuals who read your column will be the ones whose affairs are in order; the target audience should be the innocent unaware. Yours faithfully, DENIS FULLER, Fuller Spurling & Co, Guildford Place, 124 Guildford Street, Chertsey, Surrey.

Change of address proved doubly costly with the AA

From Miss E. Napier

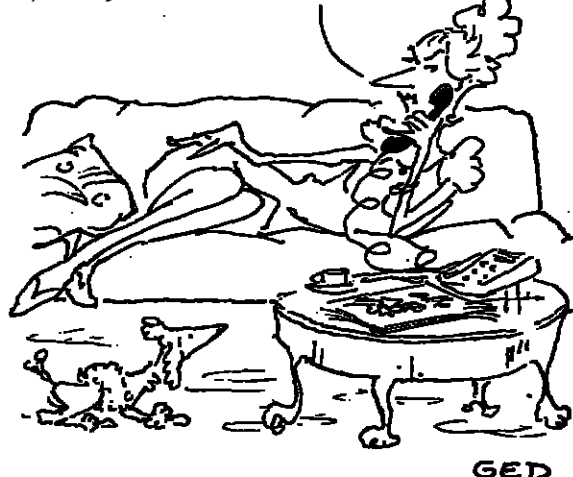
Sir, I wish to inform you and the other readers of a little known section of small print that is administered by the AA insurance services.

I recently informed them of a change of address (which I am required to do by law) yet they then charge me £25 for doing so, for "administration" (on top of any extra due to an increased risk of the new address).

I find this to be an outrageous hidden charge that would have swayed me against using their services for insurance. Other readers should take note. Needless to say I will not be renewing with the AA for anything.

Only after I complained did they agree to drop the price for "administration" to £15 — this is still excessive. Yours faithfully, ELIZABETH NAPIER, 15 Portland Court, Baltic Wharf, Bristol.

£25!?? I'm changing my home address not my Gianni Versace dress



GED

Letters or information for Weekend Money may be sent by fax to 0171-782 5082. Letters should include a daytime telephone number. The Times regrets that it cannot always give individual replies or advice and asks that original documents are not sent in. No legal responsibility can be accepted for advice or statements in these columns and independent professional advice should always be sought.

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50,000	Premium Life	5.80
2 Years		
1,000	Premium Life	5.15
10,000	Premium Life	5.15
20,000	Premium Life	5.60
50,000	Premium Life	6.15
3 Years		
1,000	Premium Life	5.60
10,000	Premium Life	6.25
20,000	Premium Life	6.35
50,000	Premium Life	6.40
4 Years		
1,000	Premium Life	5.90
3,000	ITT London & Edin	6.35
5 Years		
1,000	Premium Life	5.95
3,000	ITT London & Edin	6.45

Source: Chamberlain de Bots 0171-404 4222. Net rates. Income and capital guaranteed. Early surrender. Terms vary. Monthly income may be available.

SAVERS' BEST BUYS

Account	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Teachers' BS 01202 887171	Bullion	Instant	£500 4.80 %Yy
Scarborough BS 0800 590578	Inst by Post	Postal	£5,000 5.70 %Yy
Bristol & West BS 0800 901109	Inst Acc Post	Postal	£10,000 6.00 %Yy
Bristol & West BS 0800 901109	Inst Acc Post	Postal	£25,000 6.05 %Yy

Account	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Cheltenham & Glas 0800 717505	Direct 30	30 day p	£100 5.50 %Yy
First National BS 01232 314080	High Yield	30 day	£25,000 8.45 %Yy
Leopold Jos & Sons 0171 588 2322	40 Day Notice	40 day	£10,000 6.22 %Yy
Leeds & Holbeck BS 0113 225 7777	Postal Bonus	30.4-98p	£10,000 7.00 OM

Account	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Sun Banking Corp 01438 744505	Fixed rate	5 year	£8,575 7.50 %Yy
NorthWest Bank 0800 200400	Fixed rate	5 year	£5,000 7.45 %Yy
Birmingham Midlands 0845 720721	Instant Beater	5 year	£1,000 7.00 %Yy
West Bromwich BS 0890 143668	Instant Beater	5 year	£250 7.00 %Yy

CREDIT CARDS BEST BUYS

Card type	Interest per month	APR%	Fee per annum
Co-operative Bank 0800 108000	Advantage Visa	0.64%NC	7.90%N
Capital One Bank 0800 660000	Visa	0.70%NC	9.90%N
Robert Fleming/S&P 0800 829024	MasterCard/Visa	0.91%NC	11.50%N

PERSONAL LOANS BEST BUYS

PERSONAL LOANS	APR	Monthly payment on £3,000 for 3yrs with insurance	Monthly payment on £3,000 for 3yrs no insurance
Northern Rock BS 0345 421421	12.90%K	£112.66	£102.59
Royal Bank of Scot Dir 0800 121125	14.00%	£114.78	£101.45
Direct Line 0141 248 9686	14.80%K	£114.25	£102.46

Nb. C = no interest free period, E = available to comprehensive motor insurance policy holders over 22 years, F = Fixed Rate (all other rates variable), H = Higher rate applies if insurance not arranged, N = introductory rate for a limited period, OM = interest paid on maturity, P = By Post only.

* RATES SHOWN ARE GROSS AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE

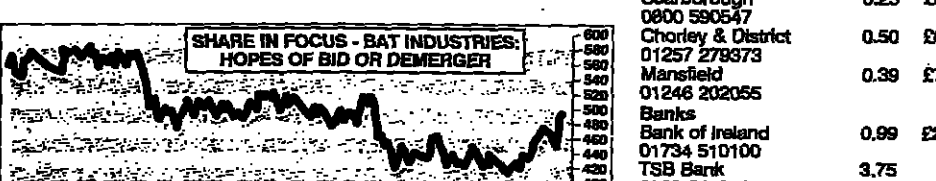
Source: MoneyFacts, the Monthly Guide to Investment & Mortgage Rates (01822 500 677)

PIBS

FIXED RATE	Gross coupon	Buying price	Issue price	Minimum purchase
Birmingham Midlands 9.375%	104.05	9.000	100.17	1,000
Bradford & Bingley 11.825%	126.89	9.161	100.13	10,000
Bradford & Bingley 13.000%	126.86	9.161	100.20	10,000
Bristol & West 13.375%	146.27	9.144	100.34	1,000
Britannia 13.000%	142.18	9.143	100.42	1,000
Coventry 12.125%	124.15	9.031	100.75	1,000
First National 11.750%	125.82	9.339	100.25	1,000
Halifax 8.750%	99.57	8.788	100.62	50,000
Halifax 12.000%	133.33	8.712	100.28	50,000
Halifax 13.625%	153.55	8.873	100.00	50,000
Leeds & Holbeck 12.875%	148.81	9.031	100.28	1,000
Newcastle 10.750%	120.55	9.002	100.32	1,000
Newcastle 12.625%	139.40	9.057	100.45	1,000
Northern Rock 12.625%	142.90	8.835	100.14	1,000
Skipston 12.875%	142.83	9.014	100.48	1,000

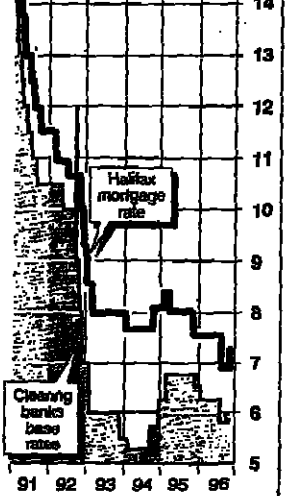
FLOATING RATE	Gross coupon	Buying price	Issue price	Minimum purchase
Cheshire (28/09-27/03) 8.1563%	107.63	100.00	1,000	1,000
First Nat (20/09-20/03) 8.48750%	101.63	100.00	1,000	1,000

PIBS = Permanent Interest-bearing Shares
Source: ANI AMRO House Govett - 0171 601 0101



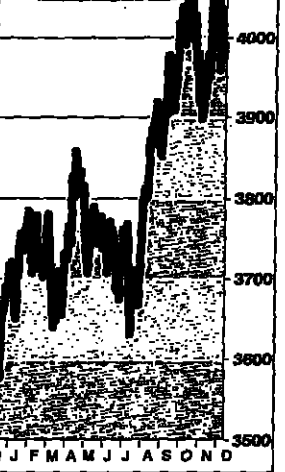
SHARE IN FOCUS - BAT INDUSTRIES: HOPES OF BID OR DEMERGER

BASE RATES V MORTGAGES



BASE RATES V MORTGAGES

FT-SE 100 PRICE INDEX



FT-SE 100 PRICE INDEX

NATIONAL SAVINGS

Gross rate	At tax rate	At 40%	At 45%	Minimum investment £	Notes	Contact
Ordinary A/c	1.50	1.20	0.90	10-10,000**	1mth	0645 645000
Investment A/c	4.75	3.80	2.85	20-500**	1mth	0645 645000
Income Bond	8.00	4.80	3.60	200-25,000**	3mth	0645 645000
First Opt Bond	6.00	4.80	3.60	100-10,000**	8day	0645 645000
43rd Issue Certificate	5.95			25-1,000	1mth	0645 645000
Children's Bonds	6.75			25-1,000	1mth	0645 645000
Gen Ext Rate	3.51					0645 645000
Capital Bonds	6.85	5.32	3.99	100-250,000	8day	0645 645000
9th Index Linked	2.50			100-10,000	8day	0645 645000
Pensioners Bond	5.70	5.60	4.20	500-50,000	60day	0645 645000

* First £70, £140 or £210 at base rate, rest at 40% or 45% (depending on age). ** For investment proceeds. * 1mth free. * Rates gross and will be guaranteed when held for 5 years. * 0.2% net bonus for £20,000 to £100,000 in addition to 81 and 82 (depending on age but credit in full. * 12500-100,000 (depending on age). * Terms apply.

PENSION ANNUITIES

All figures are the gross annual annuity (£100,000 purchase), guaranteed 5 years, paid monthly in advance

SINGLE LIFE (level ann)	Male	Age 60	Age 65	Age 70
Prudential	£9,880	£10,889	£12,295	£12,295
General	£9,844	£10,880	£12,230	£12,230
Standard LI	£9,776	£10,844	£12,248	£12,248
Canada LI	£9,758	£10,822	£12,206	£12,206
Equitable LI	£9,605	£10,824	£12,027	£12,027
SINGLE LIFE	Female	Age 60	Age 65	Age 70
Prudential	£9,204	£9,956	£11,055	£11,055
Canada LI	£9,058	£9,808	£10,948	£10,948
General	£8,950	£9,803	£10,983	£10,983
Sun LI of Can.	£8,907	£9,732	£10,824	£10,824
General AC	£8,907	£9,732	£10,824	£10,824
JOINT LIFE, 2/3 WIDOWS (level annuity)	Male	Age 60	Age 65	Age 70
Prudential	£8,930	£7,492	£8,982	£8,982
Sun Alliance	£8,772	£7,595	£8,910	£8,910
Sun Life	£8,754	£7,595	£8,910	£8,910
Equitable LI	£8,652	£7,524	£8,988	£8,988
Standard LI	£8,632	£7,520	£8,924	£8,924

Source: Annuity Direct (0171 589 8383)

Statistics compiled by Lizanne Rose

LARGER LENDERS

Lender	Interest rate %	Loan size	Max %	Notes
Building Societies				
Bristol & West	1.95	£15k+	95	5.04% disc 6 mth
0800 608088				1% discount 6 mth
Lambeth	3.74	£15-150k	95	3.25% disc for 12 months
0171 928 1331				2% discount for 12 months
Woodstock	4.99	£20-200k	95	2% discount for 12 months
0800 126125				
Banks				
Bank of Ireland	0.99	£20-145k	95	6.25% disc 6 mth
01754 510100				3% discount for 12 months
TSB Bank	3.25	£15k+	95	3.74% disc for 12 months
0500 758000				

Larger lenders, loans and first-time buyers tables by Day's Guides Ltd (01713 804082)

GUARANTEED 9% FIRST YEAR BONUS

If you are looking for high returns and security, the leading with profits bonds can offer you an annual bonus - 9% guaranteed in the first year. Phone us for full details.

0800 526 091

CALL NOW ON FREEPHONE 0800 526 091

Net of basic rate tax.

CHASE DE VERE

REPRESENTED BY THE RESIDENTIAL INVESTMENT AUTHORITY

UNIT-LINKED INSURANCE INVESTMENTS

Bd Offer Why %				Bd Offer Why %				Bd Offer Why %				Bd Offer Why %				Bd Offer Why %				Bd Offer Why %				Bd Offer Why 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Equities end week unsettled

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

High	Low	Company	Price	%	High	Low	Company	Price	%
100	99	ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES			100	99	ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES		
100	99	BANKS			100	99	BANKS		
100	99	BREWERIES, PUBS & REST			100	99	BREWERIES, PUBS & REST		
100	99	DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS			100	99	DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS		
100	99	ENGINEERING, VEHICLES			100	99	ENGINEERING, VEHICLES		
100	99	FOOD MANUFACTURERS			100	99	FOOD MANUFACTURERS		
100	99	HEALTHCARE			100	99	HEALTHCARE		
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100	99	LEISURE & HOTELS			100	99	LEISURE & HOTELS		
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THE TIMES SATURDAY DECEMBER 14 1996

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Scotland looking to hone vital edge in experience



Hastings: brought back to win his 63rd cap

BY MARK SOUSTER

THOSE harbingers of doom who usually emerge at this time of year, to lament lacklustre autumnal performances and predict humiliation in the five nations' championship, will be waiting to pounce should Scotland fail to dispatch Italy in anything less than convincing fashion at Murrayfield today.

In the past two years, the scops have been confounded by Scotland's ability to put a new year gloss on pre-Christmas dross. The fact remains, however, that after four consecutive defeats, the Dunblane match notwithstanding, Scotland cannot afford another setback before their five nations' campaign begins on January 18.

Italy yesterday named a side showing six changes, two of them positional, from that soundly beaten by England. Marcello Cuttitta has been persuaded to end his retirement and will play on the left

wing, with Mazzucato on the right. Vacari, who scored two second-half tries against England, switches to centre. Castellani plays at tight-head, Croci at lock forward and Arando at No 8.

Expectation proved too great a burden for Italy at Twickenham, or, as Massimo Giovanelli, their captain, said: "The emotion of the occasion was too much for us." Now, however, with a recognised ball-winner in Croci back in the fold, Italy believe that they can take another significant step towards their ambition of forcing the expansion of the five nations' championship to one of six nations from 1998.

After a rigorous two-hour workout at a bright but bitterly cold Boroughmuir RFC ground yesterday, Giovanelli said: "It is important that we do well. We know Scotland in front of a Murrayfield crowd will be very difficult to beat, but I want the boys to experience things like this, and new ways of playing, like the

Scottish rucking. That is the only way we will improve. We want to demonstrate that we are good players."

A repeat of the win in Rieti earlier this year against the

full Scotland side in all but name — and one that went on to contest a grand slam — might be asking too much of them on this occasion, but Scotland will be aware of the

dangers of underestimating opponents who will lack nothing in commitment and who showed against England that, given a modicum of possession, they can compete with the best.

Italy will not be intimidated in the scrum, despite the absence through injury of Curti, Marzio Stewart, the one new Scotland cap, at tight-head, is guaranteed a fierce baptism.

With the threat offered by Italy on the flanks, the recall of Scott Hastings at outside centre for his 63rd cap makes sound sense. The Scotland threequarters, who share more than 200 caps, have experience to spare, a commodity that an evolving Italy team may find hard to counter.

Scotland will have to be clinical, convert their chances and not panic or become frustrated should the going get tough. "I think there will be two reasonably-matched sides out there tomorrow and, as with all internationals, it will be decided by whoever wants to win the most," Dixon said. However, anything other than an emphatic victory for Scotland would bring the critics out in droves.

TODAY'S TEAMS AT MURRAYFIELD

SCOTLAND

R J S Shepherd (Melrose)
A G Stanger (Hawick)
S Hastings (Watsonians)
G P J Townsend (Northampton)
K M Logan (Stirling County)
C M Chalmers (Melrose)
S W Redpath (Melrose)
D J W Hilton (Bath)
D D MacKinnon (Stirling County)
M Stewart (Northampton)
M I Wallace (Glasgow Hawks)
D F Cronin (Wasps)
A I Reed (Wasps)
I R Smith (Glasgow)
E W Peters (Bath)

Replaces: D Gillet (France)

REPLACEMENTS: 16 D A Stark (Melrose), 17 B R S Eriksen (L. Scottish), 18 D Patterson (Hornsea), 19 G W West (Newcastle), 20 B D Stewart (Edinburgh A), 21 D G Ellis (Currie).

ITALY

15 J Perile (Roma)
14 N Mazzucato (Padova)
13 P Vaccaro (Calvisano)
12 I Francescato (Treviso)
11 Marcello Cuttitta (Milan)
10 D Dominguez (Milan)
9 A Troncon (Treviso)
8 Massimo Cuttitta (Milan)
7 C Orlandi (Milan)
6 A Castellani (Treviso)
5 M Giovanelli (PUC)
4 W Cristofaletto (Treviso)
3 G Croci (Milan)
2 A Sgorlon (Treviso)
1 O Arando (Milan)

Replaces: 16 A Moscardi (Treviso), 17 V Galletti (Rovigo), 18 C Checchinato (Treviso), 19 G Guidi (Livorno), 20 F Mazzanti (Treviso), 21 L Martini (Treviso)

Reed rises above ravages of injury

Mark Souster reports
on a remarkable return to the international fold

In every sportsman's life there comes a time when he has to admit, however reluctantly, that enough is enough. Either his career has run its natural course or injury and its ravaging ill-effects have curtailed it. For Andy Reed that moment came 12 months ago, when recovery from a debilitating back injury seemed unlikely and retirement appeared the only option. Surveying the useless scaffolding of his 6ft 7in body, he turned to Sarah, his wife, and said: "Let's just get back to Cornwall and forget rugby."

"I felt so down then," Reed said after his recall to the Scotland team to play Italy today. "I love Cornwall and the sea, messing about on boats and the like. I don't know what I would have done; it seemed the best place to go."

Cornwall, more precisely Bodmin, is of course where Reed began his rapid journey to the pinnacle of international rugby, first with Bath, then Scotland, for whom he qualified via his mother, and ultimately, with the British Isles, all in the space of two years. It was a voyage of discovery rudely interrupted by a prolapsed disc in December 1994. An operation was necessary but complications set in and, seven months after delicate surgery on his spine, in February last year, he was back at square one.

"With hindsight I did not get the proper advice on how to counter the effects of the operation," Reed said. "I had set the World Cup as a target for a comeback but soon realised that was out of the question. The back was still sore and there were times when it felt that my leg had been caught in a vice."

For help, he turned to the Scottish Rugby Union and Jimmy Graham, its orthopaedic surgeon. It was discovered that scar and nerve tissue had fused together; another operation and months of intensive physiotherapy and manipulation at the hands of Glen Hunter, in Bristol, brought renewed hope.

By the end of last season he had recovered sufficiently to earn a place on the bench for the Pilkington Cup final. By then, though, his relationship with Bath had soured, partly because he felt that the club had abandoned him to his own devices after the operation. Overtures were made by London Scottish, but, at the last minute, Wasps stepped in.

Five games later and with his second-row partnership with Damian Cronin rekindled, Reed soon showed that he still possessed the ability that Scotland have sorely missed. That opinion was reinforced when Arthur Hastie, the Scotland manager, watched his progress on the recent Ediles' tour to Spain and Portugal.

"When I joined Wasps I was just delighted to get the opportunity to play again," Reed said. "I realised I was missing it, but playing again for Scotland didn't really enter my head then. Things have gone pretty well, though. Now being back in the international side is a dream."

"I've missed two five nations' championships, a World Cup and a tour to New Zealand. I'm 27 now and I'll take one game at a time. I'm fitter and stronger than I have ever been. I just hope I can stay clear of injury, and play at least two seasons of unbroken rugby in the top flight." Italy, with whom Scotland have a few old scores to settle, would seem a good starting point.



Teichmann, centre, has proved a towering influence in presiding over the South Africans' recent resurgence

Teichmann has will to succeed

David Hands on the man chosen to lead South Africa out of the shadows

So how do you follow in the footsteps of a man who has become the idol of a nation, who has held the World Cup aloft, who walks and talks with presidents? In 1995 Francois Pienaar became the symbol of a new South Africa, politicised in a way that few captains of sporting teams will ever know.

Hence the public furor when he was omitted from the South African party whose tour of Argentina and France concludes tomorrow in the one-off international against Wales. Whatever his opponents may think of Andre Markgraaff, the manager/coach of South Africa, it was the bravest of decisions to discount Pienaar, nor can it have been easy for the player who now leads South Africa, Gary Teichmann.

Well, those on the outside may think that. Teichmann appears remarkably at ease with the role, perhaps because sportsmen accept the inevitability of injury or swings in selectorial judgments. The impression created by Teichmann, the No 8 from Natal — and verified by those who know him best — is that he is a player's player, quiet off the field, but a dynamic influence on it.

Teichmann, born in Zimbabwe but brought up on his parents' farm near Pietermaritzburg, has never appeared a natural leader. Asked about his experiences as captain, he joked that, at Hilton College, his school, he captained the cricket team — once, yet last season, when he was invited to lead Natal in succession to the grim-visaged Waal

Bartmann, he took them to the Currie Cup final and offered a successful defence this season when Natal beat Transvaal, Pienaar and all, in the final.

Teichmann, 29, is the classic example of a late developer. "When we asked him to captain Natal we did so because we knew the players respected him and would follow him," Andy Keast, then director of rugby in the province and now coaching director at Harlequins, said. "He's a shrewd man, he studies the game — he was always asking for videos of possible opponents — and he leads by example."

He may be, indeed, exactly what South Africa need in the post-World Cup era. Just as Pienaar offered inspired leadership during 1993-95 (though few would necessarily include him in their optimum South Africa XV of that period), now is a time for reflection and regrouping and Teichmann has helped to draw his touring party together after the frenzy of criticism heaped on the selectors two months ago.

"Captaincy was never an ambition of mine, but I was in the side when Francois was captain, then he got injured and I was asked to do the job," Teichmann, 6ft 5in and 15st 10lb, said. "When all the fuss was going on in Johannesburg about the tour party, I was down in Durban concentrating on the Currie Cup final and, immediately after that, we left for Argentina and all the attention was turned off."

"During the tri-nations series against Australia and New Zealand, I came to understand that players

Little consolation in bare statistics for hungry Wales

BY GERALD DAVIES

WALES have met South Africa nine times in the past 90 years and have never beaten them. The nearest they came to registering a win was in 1970 when Gareth Edwards's try in the northeast corner of the Arms Park secured a draw in the closing stages.

Wales suffered heavy losses on the two occasions that the countries met on South African soil, but they can take some consolation in recognising that the margins at home have been nowhere near so devastating. In reality, though, no international competitor should take any comfort from such starkly desolating statistics. None of the other home countries can stare at so bare a cupboard.

Perhaps this should be a motivating factor. For sure, Wales need to look somewhere for inspiration, even if it is only to a long history of failure against the republic. This can work wonders on a one-off occasion, but what Wales need is a victory, which might also help to reverse the trend that shows that, of the four teams that they have beaten in their 11 outings this year, only France, in the five nations' championship last season, can be numbered among the elite. Italy (twice) and the Barbarians are the others. These are disappointing statistics.

For their part, South Africa arrive in Wales on the back of a monumental series against New Zealand in which, if they failed overall, they did win the last international match. This was followed by two wins against Argentina and a successful two-match series in France. After a long period of isolation and the hesitant start that followed their sporting integration, this tour has represented their first substantial success away from their home patch.

South Africa may not be as fluid in their running or as flexible in their tactics as New Zealand, but their old virtues of power, stubborn resilience and fierce pride are there in abundance. For the fifth consecutive time, their team remains unchanged. Through such familiarity we are beginning to understand where their reputation is made.

Nothing of the sort can be said about their opponents. The Wales team is in a state of flux. They won more than 55 per cent of lineup possession in all their matches last season, but lost this phase by 21-9 against Australia a fortnight ago. So Derwyn Jones, who

was present throughout last season, has been dropped to allow Mark Rowley to win his first cap at 32. Dale McIntosh also wins his first cap at blind-side flanker and is accompanied on the flank by Colin Charvis, who starts a match for the first time, having gone on for the injured Hemi Taylor in the last game.

There is further uncertainty elsewhere which clouds any assessment of Wales. Neil Jenkins, dropped from stand-off half for the last match, returns to play, but at full back, while Dafydd James, normally a centre for his club, has his second chance on the left wing.

Gareth Thomas drops out because of a mouth injury and is replaced by Allan Bateman, who won the last of his four caps in 1990 before joining Warrington to play rugby league. After a period in Australia, he is now with Richmond and had a fine match for the Barbarians last weekend when he scored a try. Thus, with Scott Gibbs and Jonathan Davies, he hopes to resume a midfield trio which last played together in the rugby league World Cup last year. Wales had, however, to send Davies home with suspended status for the last match. A decision on whether he plays will be made this morning.

So it is very much a contest between a well-proven and successful combination — strong in confidence and relaxed in the certainty of their play — and a team of mixed identity, unsure of themselves and unclear of the way forward. It will require a huge effort on Wales's part to even the contest.

Bateman and Gareth Llewellyn, the lock, missed training yesterday because of a derailment near Reading. They were on their way to join the Wales session at the Institute of Sport in Cardiff, which would have been particularly valuable for Bateman, whose place in the team was confirmed only on Thursday.

Mark Jones, of Ebbw Vale, has received a four-week suspension after being sent off for punching, but Vale officials are planning an appeal as Jones would miss important league games. Stuart Evans, the Swansea prop, dismissed after fighting with Jones in a club game last month, is still waiting to hear his fate.



Davies: sent home

WALES

N R Jenkins (Pontypool)
I C Evans (Llanelli)
A G Bateman (Richmond)
I S Gibbs (Swansea)
D James (Bridgend)
J Davies (Cardiff)
R Howley (Cardiff)
C Loader (Swansea)
J M Humphreys (Cardiff)
D Young (Cardiff)
D L M McIntosh (Pontypool)
G O Llewellyn (Harlequins)
M Rowley (Pontypool)
C Clervie (Swansea)
S M Williams (Neath)

Replaces: S Lander (England)

REPLACEMENTS: 16 A C Thomas (Swansea), 17 P J John (Pontypool), 18 L B Davies (Cardiff), 19 N Thomas (Bath), 20 L Muesio (Cardiff), 21 G R Jenkins (Swansea).

SOUTH AFRICA

15 A J Joubert (Natal)
14 J T Small (Natal)
13 J C Mulder (Transvaal)
12 H P le Roux (Transvaal)
11 J Olivier (Northern Transvaal)
10 H W Honiball (Natal)
9 J H van der Westhuizen (NT)
8 D Theron (Griqualand West)
7 J Dutton (Transvaal)
6 A C Garvey (Natal)
5 R J Kruger (N Transvaal)
4 J J Wiese (Transvaal)
3 M G Andrews (Natal)
2 A G Venter (Free State)
1 G H Teichmann (Natal)

TV: BBC2, 2.50pm

REPLACEMENTS: 18 A H Synman (N Transvaal), 17 W Fyfe (Natal), 18 K B Pitt (Natal), 19 F J van Heerden (W Province), 20 A van der Linde (W Province), 21 H Tromp (N Transvaal).



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ATHLETICS

Rewards put up to catch big names

FROM DAVID POWELL, ATHLETICS CORRESPONDENT, IN MONTE CARLO

WORLD indoor champions will be paid almost as much prize-money as outdoor world champions and there will be substantial cash rewards for the global champions of cross country and race walking from next year.

These are the surprise elements in a four-year, \$19 million prize-money package approved by the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) council here.

The IAAF announced in March that world championships prize-money would be paid for the first time in 1997, but only now has it settled on the figures.

In the past winners of outdoor world titles have received cars as payment, but they will get hard cash from now on.

The first IAAF prize-money championships will be the world indoor event in Paris in March, from which the winners will take home \$50,000 (about £30,000). Winners at the outdoor world championships in Athens next August will earn \$60,000.

The difference in achievement is not reflected in the difference in pay, but the IAAF is trying to attract the best athletes to its ailing indoor championships.

There was no suggestion in March that cross country or race walking would be included, but, henceforward,

the former is to have \$104,000 in prize-money and the latter \$150,000. A world cross-country champion will receive \$40,000 and a race walking champion \$20,000.

Runners-up at the world cross-country championships will earn \$20,000 and third-placed athletes \$10,000, rising down to \$5,000 for sixth place.

In all events, there will be equal pay for women. At the indoor world championships, runners-up will take \$20,000 and third-placed athletes \$10,000.

At the outdoor championships, the corresponding figures are \$30,000 and \$20,000. The World Cup, another event that the IAAF is anxious to protect from athletes' indifference, will pay \$50,000 to each winner.

Cullen declared fit

GREAT Britain's prospects of medals at the European cross-country championships in Charleroi, Belgium, tomorrow were assisted yesterday when Keith Cullen shook off flu to travel with the squad and a potential individual champion for the host nation was ruled out (David Powell writes).

Fourth last year, Cullen is an essential component of a squad which should win team gold medals.

"I think it is going to be tough for me now," Cullen said, recognising that the effects of flu on a runner last

for more than a week. The question is to what extent Cullen's standard will drop, but, if he can hold a place in the top ten, gold may not be lost. That would still require one of the other three — Spencer Barden, Darius Burrows, or Christian Stephenson — to finish in the top 20.

Jon Brown and Andrew Pearson are potential individual medal winners, more so now that Mohamed Mourhit, a Moroccan living in Belgium, has failed to gain citizenship in time. Mourhit has won races in Ghent and Roussel at this season.

Michael Johnson, the Olympic 200 metres and 400 metres champion, has been among those to complain at the IAAF's intransigence over prize-money. While welcoming yesterday the new measures, Johnson said that he still did not intend to compete at the indoor world championships.

There are two outdoor world championships in the four-year period and they will consume approximately half of total prize-money. There will be some money, too, for the half marathon and road relay world championships.



Carl Lewis, above, who has won nine Olympic gold medals since 1984, said yesterday that he will retire at the end of the 1997 season. Although he will not represent the United States, he is hoping to appear at circuit meetings.

Italian stallions unveil whole new ball game

SIMON BARNES



On Saturday

WHERE was I? Oh yes, sex. You will be delighted to learn that a group of male Italian striptease artists have formed what they call a national football team, and they intend to play and raise money for charity. They do so under the aegis of their newly-founded governing body, the Italian National Striptease Soccer Federation. They will train twice a week, and play every fortnight.

They will play in a blue and white, ah... strip. "No loincloths," their captain and federation president, known only as Nicolas, said. "We preferred a classical uniform. After all, we are professional strip-artists, not gigolos." Perish *las pensata*.

Sticks and stones

Last Saturday I heard the Chelsea fans in full cry: "The referee indulges in a practice that, according to traditional belief, will have a deleterious effect upon his eyesight, if it has not done so already, and will also lead, if again it has not already done so, to the degeneration of his mental faculties, such as they are." Or words to that effect. The referee took it in his stride. They are made of less stern stuff in the Wharfedale Triangle premier division, in Yorkshire.

During the game between Inackley Commercial and Guiseley Victoria last week-end, with the score 2-0 to Guiseley, Paul Farrell, the referee, abandoned the match. The helpful remarks of a single spectator persuaded Farrell to walk off. The person was persuaded to go away and then the referee was persuaded to continue with the match. Guiseley went on to win.

Flicking yarns

Great causes excite great passions and I am delighted to announce that Subbuteo has, at last, got the book it deserves. This is *Fifty Years of Flicking Football*, by Richard Payne, published by York Publications, at £7.25. It covers all forms of table-top football, though the lion's share, naturally, goes to Subbuteo (which, being not so much a pastime as a hobby, was named by its bird-inventor, Peter Adolph, after the hobby falcon, scientific name *Falco subbuteo*).

Did you know that there are Subbuteo versions of speed way, cricket, hockey and even angling? Perhaps the last one comes complete with dead plastic cornorants. Anyway, the book, like the author's 1963 Mexico team (from the Continental Display set, price 27s 6d) is a treasure.

Setting it straight

You may recall that the volleyball event at the Atlanta Olympics was taken away from Cobb County, because that redneck enclave had declared that homosexuality was against community standards. Naturally, everyone assumed that the Atlanta organising committee (ACOG) was making a stand against intolerance, but Dick Yarborough, the gloriously inept ACOG publicity man, has now explained all to the Atlanta Constitution. The reason, he said, was not to support gay rights, but to keep gays away from the Games.

The ACOG was against "giving gay advocates the highest profile platform with which to rally their troops worldwide. We moved the event, keeping the Games and the gays out of Cobb". Yee-ha, more redneck than thou, eh?

Author, author

I think we should have a quiz this week to celebrate the first catalogue of Bodyline Books, a cricketing book service filled with antique gold and iron pyrites. They can be reached at 150a, Harbour Street, London, SW6 6PH. Name the author of the following titles, all available from Bodyline: 1. *A Game Enjoyed*; 2. *Cricket Is My Life*; 3. *The King of Games*; 4. *Cricket — How to Succeed*; 5. *A La Recherche du Cricket Perdu*.

It could be you

And the entries are beginning to pile up for the Magic Numbers competition this year. I already have some real betters, to be revealed around Christmas time. As ever, a bottle of Nicolas Fouillat champagne as a reward to the senders. The favourite number at this early stage is four, which goes to Steve Redgrave, naturally. One cheery soul has added an additional magic number for Redgrave — five, I half-suspect this is Steve, himself, under a pseudonym. Anyway, more magic numbers are solicited.

Answers to books quiz: 1. *FBH May*, 2. *Len Hutton*, 3. *Frank Woolley*, 4. *Douglas Jardine*, 5. *Alec* — and at six quid I reckon it's an absolute steal. It must be one of those rare copies. An unsigned one.

SWIMMING: EUROPEAN SUCCESSES PROVIDE WELCOME BOOST FOR BRITISH WOMEN'S TEAM

Silver medal encourages Rolph to reach for record

FROM CRAIG LORD IN ROSTOCK, GERMANY

SUSAN ROLPH, of Newcastle, has a world best time in the individual medley in her sights today after winning the silver medal behind Sandra Völker in the 100 metres freestyle at the European short-course championships here yesterday.

British women, who have enjoyed few successes recently, celebrated further gains as Sarah Collings, 18, won the bronze medal in the 800 metres freestyle in a personal best, in a session that produced two European records.

The first of those fell to Völker, 22, from Hamburg, in the 100 metres freestyle, her time of 53.04sec just 0.03sec outside the 1993 world record of Le Jingyi, of China, and 0.29sec better than the previous European record of Franziska van Almsick, also from Germany, who is not competing here. The effort came barely half an hour after Völker had swum inside the European record of 27.25sec over 50 metres butterfly, but had been beaten by Johanna Sjöberg, of Sweden, who swam 27.15sec, to Völker's 27.25sec. Both women received DM5,000 (about £2,000) for their records.

Racing in the lane next to Völker in the freestyle, Rolph, 18, a part-time sports science student at Newcastle College, gained on the German over the first three of four lengths but lost badly at the start and each turn. She slipped almost a second off her best time to record 54.46sec, just 0.07sec shy of Karen Pickering's British record.

Rolph divulged that she was being put under pressure to swim at the British championships in Sheffield next week despite having assured her French sponsor, the Clichy swim club of Paris, that she would compete in France. She signed a four-event deal

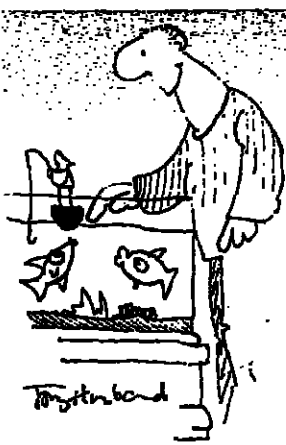
with Clichy after the Olympic Games that is worth some £5,000 to her between now and the spring.

However, the Amateur Swimming Association of England, which will pay her £1,800 in training expenses over the same period, has told her that that money could be at risk should she miss Sheffield.

Rolph said that she was trying not to dwell on the matter because she wanted to concentrate on attempting the world best time over the 100 metres medley today. She was inside the mark until 75 metres in a race earlier this year.

Rich pickings

Which British sports stars did the best in 1996? The magazine, *Total Sport*, lists their own reckoning on the subject. Here is their top ten: 10, Stephen Hendry £2.1 million; 9, Paul Gascoigne £2.2 million; equal 7, Colin Montgomerie, Colin McRae £2.5 million; 6, Eddie Irvine £2.8 million; 5, Naseem Hamed £4 million; 4, Lennox Lewis £4.5 million; 3, Frank Bruno £5.5 million; 2, Darius Hill £7 million; 1, Nick Faldo £8 million. One woman makes the top 50: Laura Davies is seven-



THE SUBSTANTIAL YESTERDAY'S THREE MEETINGS

Cheltenham

Going good to firm in places

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Forgotten £5 million man revels in return to centre forward's stage Sutton strikes back for Blackburn

CHRIS SUTTON
THE FACE OF FOOTBALL

By David Maddock



Sutton is looking forward to a brighter future as a revitalised centre forward after struggling to establish himself at Blackburn Rovers

Chris Sutton pauses to consider an answer, deliberate, these days, in the silence. The silence is filled by a scratchy old movie, showing away without an audience on a television in the corner. It is Alastair Sim as Scrooge, giving the performance of his life in Dickens's tale of atonement. Somehow, it seems singularly appropriate. Sutton, the Blackburn Rovers forward, has his own Christmas story to tell this year. He is a man with a past and very much a man with a future. Perhaps it is a little too dramatic to suggest that he has returned after being haunted by ghosts from his history, but he does seem to be a changed man.

People had forgotten about Sutton. After securing a championship medal in his first season at Ewood Park, he spent nearly a whole year out of the game, struggling with the demons of injury and exile. Now he is back, a better, wiser man for the time he spent idle. He has, he states bluntly, grown up. The process was aided by his enforced period of reflection, but, in truth, it was natural, almost a rite of passage. As a teenager, he was thrust towards stardom with Norwich City, a headline-grabbing young man of goals. As a 21-year-old, he became the most expensive player in Great Britain, when Kenny Dalglish, then the Blackburn manager, paid £5 million for him.

Quite why people expect young footballers who are presented with fame and money – vast amounts of it – to act sensibly and maturely is a mystery, Sutton did not. There was a paternity suit, a few nightclub incidents, one of which famously led to his incarceration in a police cell the night before he signed for Blackburn.

"When I look back, I did a lot of daft things," he said. "I made some mistakes and I have had to live with them, but we are talking years ago."

Everybody makes mistakes. I've got over the past. I have changed and, yes, I think I have matured. I got married and we have got two little boys. Now I lead a quiet life in a Lancashire village and that's the way I like it. No hassles, no problems and a very settled life. I'm not too interested in what happened in the past any more.

Life at Blackburn started perfectly, but went downhill, even during that first season, when he won a championship medal and formed a partnership with Alan Shearer, dubbed the SAS. The goals dried up after Christmas and the next season there were problems with Shearer and Ray Harford, the new manager, whom Sutton condemned recently, for apparently almost ruining his career. Then there was the injury.

There were murmurs at Blackburn that it was not

genuine. "I know what people said, but it was a difficult injury for me," Sutton said. "It wasn't exactly a serious one and that made it all the more frustrating. It was just a nagging one – my tendons in the ankle were slipping because the support was ripped off the bone – and it just wouldn't heal."

Even before the injury, he was left out of the side by Harford and then propelled backwards into defence. Could Shearer have been an influence in that decision? Rumour has it that the Shearer lobby bid for Sutton to be left out in favour of Mike Newell. Sutton is coy on the subject, saying that he got on "reasonably" well with Shearer, but it is clear, since his return to the Blackburn starting line-up, that he has been liberated by Shearer's departure. His return heralded an immediate upturn in fortune for the club and

his goals have helped to guide them off the bottom of the FA Carling Premiership.

Tony Parkes, the caretaker manager, must take some of the credit, but so must Sutton, who again looks every inch the rounded centre forward that prompted Dalglish to spend so much on him. His absence, he said, was not a totally negative experience.

"I don't know if the fact that I've changed as a person has improved me as a player, but I do think that the time I spent out injured has helped me now that I am back," Sutton said. "I never doubted myself, even when I was left out, and I don't think I ever lost form. A long injury makes you stronger. It makes you appreciate things more when you are fit."

"Now I am back as a main striker and I enjoy the responsibility of that, too. I played as the second striker behind Alan Shearer and, even though I didn't feel comfortable in that position, I had to accept it. I was criticised for not scoring goals, but I knew that would happen in that role. I've scored

a few goals now and I think I am back to the place I started at Blackburn. It might sound funny, but I really enjoy my football, even though we are still struggling, because I am just happy to be playing again, and in a position I enjoy."

Sutton's life certainly seems happier after the trauma of the past year. He is less moody than when he first arrived at Blackburn and certainly more positive. He has direction where once there might have been none.

"I am more relaxed," he said. "I can take criticism on the chin far better than a couple of years ago and I don't let people bother me. I have set myself goals and I can concentrate on them without being

distracted. The only one I have for this season is survival for Blackburn and there is definitely hope now."

Beyond that, I think Blackburn can get back to where they were. That might help me, because I'd very much like to play for my country. People think I've only had a nightmare at Blackburn, but I scored goals and got two England B caps.

"I don't know how close I came to a full cap, but I haven't given up hope yet."

Interview over, and Alastair Sim is treating Bob Cratchit to a festive turkey, character reformed and ghost banished. The same might be said of Chris Sutton.

No safe haven for Scales against Leeds

By Peter Ball

LAST Sunday John Scales was at Elland Road for a medical before an expected transfer to Leeds United from Liverpool. This afternoon he is likely to get a hotter reception when he returns there as a Tottenham Hotspur player, having elected to join the London club instead.

Having been out for a month through injury, Scales seems unlikely to play in the FA Carling Premiership fixture, although, with Tottenham weakened by the loss of Armstrong and Anderton, he was named in the 18-man squad yesterday. Elland Road is always a hostile place to visit, and Scales might normally prefer to be on the pitch rather than be a sitting target in the stand or on the bench.

After Leeds's tough-tackling victory against Chelsea two weeks ago, though, he might still be safer than on the pitch.

"We've got to do that on a regular basis," George Graham, the Leeds manager, said yesterday. Tottenham, whose last trip to the North brought their 6-1 humiliation by Bolton Wanderers, have been warned. Gunnar Halle, Leeds's latest signing, could make his debut, but the unhappy Yeboah is out after injuring a knee.

Liverpool could be unchanged for the visit of Middlesbrough, who will have Emerson in tow. After the embarrassment of the home defeat by Sheffield Wednesday last week – which cost them second place in the Premiership – and other recent failures at Anfield, Roy Evans, the Liverpool manager, may be tempted to recall Collymore.

Emerson's return is almost Middlesbrough's only good news, although Mikkel Beck is fit again. With Fjortoft doing well against Leeds in his first game of the season last week, Beck's return is less pressing as Middlesbrough seek to end a run of 11 Premiership games without a win. Juninho, Pearson and Vickers are all absent and there are doubts about Cox, Mustoe and Fleming.

"We've got major problems," Bryan Robson, the Middlesbrough manager, said.

Liverpool will move back into second place if Wimble-

don falter against rapidly improving Blackburn Rovers at Selhurst Park. Vinnie Jones is on international duty with Wales, so Fear takes over his position and Earle the captaincy, as Wimbledon strive to come to terms with being a top team for others to shoot at.

Joe Kinnear, the manager, is at least growing accustomed to it with his talk in recent weeks of taking on Europe, rather than of bolting to Dublin. Blackburn, though, are unbeaten in their previous five games and are looking a different side since Tony Parkes became caretaker-manager and Sutton, Wilcox and Le Saux returned to action.

Parkes is undoubtedly enjoying it, and he confirmed

England will face Italy in Nantes on June 4 next year in their first match in the Tournament of France. The four-team competition, also involving the host nation and Brazil, has been planned as a rehearsal for the 1998 World Cup. England will play France in Montpellier on June 7 and Brazil in Lens on June 10.

that he will be happy to stay in charge until the summer, if Blackburn have to wait that long to appoint Sven Goran Eriksson, the Swede who is, at present, the manager of Sampdoria in Italy. "I'll stay on as long as Jack Walker wants me to, and if it's until the end of the season, that's fair enough," Parkes said yesterday. He may have to make a change for the match today: Bohinen is standing by for his first game under Parkes if Flitcroft fails a fitness test.

Chelsea travel to Roker Park to take on Sunderland tomorrow with something to prove after their defeat at Leeds raised serious doubts about their resilience. Sunderland will also put them under physical pressure. Hughes and Melville will join their team-mates after playing for Wales, as will Petrescu, the Romania international, who is flying back after his country's game with Macedonia.

Irish must keep underdogs at bay Gould hopes for seasonal cheer

By David Maddock

By Russell Kempson

AFTER a credible draw with the European champions – in their own back yard, no less – surely it would not be asking too much of Northern Ireland to dispose of Albania without a fuss. Wrong. If any side is capable of drawing with Germany and then losing to a bunch of apparent no-hopers, it is Northern Ireland.

In Belfast, unpredictability has been honed to an art form. Thus, Northern Ireland go into the World Cup qualifying match at Windsor Park today supported not even with a country's population.

Northern Ireland are quite

The draw in Germany has offered the merest glimmer of hope for qualification, after all seemed lost just two home ties into the campaign. "We got ourselves into a right mess with those indifferent home performances," Bryan Hamilton, the Northern Ireland manager, said, "but we pushed the door open a tiny crack against Germany and now we need a decent result to force it wider. The door to qualification is still not locked."

As much, in fact, depends on events hundreds of miles away as it does on the proceedings at Windsor Park. Assuming that Albania can be overcome and assuming, confidently, that Germany will top the group, then it is the performance of Portugal that could yet influence Northern Ireland's fortunes. A defeat for Portugal in Lisbon by Germany this evening would help matters.

What does not help is a catalogue of injuries that stretch already feeble resources to the limit. Five players have pulled out and, while O'Boyle, Worthington and even Griffin may not be missed, the losses of Gillespie and Magilton are severe blows.

Albania, too, are missing key players, although their problems may seem slight bearing in mind that they had feared that they would not be allowed to play the game at all. Albania were suspended by Fifa, football's world governing body, only two weeks ago after political interference from the Albanian Government, although such problems as there were have been resolved. It remains to be seen if Hamilton can have the same effect on a defence woefully lacking in the previous two home matches.

Holland. They would then play off over two legs against another group runner-up. A trip to France is still possible.

Yet Turkey are no pushovers. Though they departed Euro 96 pointless and goalless, they were never overawed amid such exalted company. Dean Saunders, the Nottingham Forest striker, played for Galatasaray for a season, scoring 21 goals in 28 games, and advises caution this afternoon.

"Technically, they are very good," he said. "The defenders are comfortable on the ball and they always want to give Hakan Sukur, their best player, as much possession as possible. They perhaps tend to get a bit disorganised, especially in the last 20 minutes, if things aren't going too well for them. Whatever happens, we've got to keep trying to be positive."

Saunders, the scorer of four goals in his past three games for Wales, has registered only two for Forest this season. Hakan, his former team-mate at Galatasaray, has scored 17, ten in the past month. "Wales have to win, but we can stop them," Hakan said. "We must play as a team, we must play together."

For Gould, the bitter after-taste of Eindhoven still lingers. He cut a solitary, forlorn figure in Istanbul, 24 hours later, and wants no repetition. He got his players Turkey for Christmas, albeit 11 days early, and it is they who must now do the stuffing.

Wales' line-up: Goalkeeper: S. Jenkins; Defenders: S. T. Jones, S. T. Jones, S. T. Jones, S. T. Jones; Forwards: S. T. Jones, S. T. Jones, S. T. Jones, S. T. Jones.

Wales have to beat Turkey twice – and probably Belgium, too – if they are to finish in second place behind

GROUP NINE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Portugal	3	2	0	1	9	3	6
Ukraine	3	2	0	1	9	3	6
Germany	3	2	0	1	9	3	6
Armenia	3	1	0	2	4	8	3
Northern Ireland	3	0	2	1	4	8	2
Albania	3	0	1	2	3	12	1

RESULTS: Northern Ireland 0 Ukraine 0; Armenia 0 Portugal 0; Northern Ireland 1 Armenia 1; Ukraine 2 Portugal 1; Albania 0 Portugal 3; Armenia 1 Germany 0; Albania 1 Armenia 1; Germany 1 Northern Ireland 1.

MATCHES TO COME: Today: Northern Ireland v Albania; Portugal v Ukraine; March 28 1997: Albania v Ukraine; Northern Ireland v Portugal; April 5: Albania v Germany; Ukraine v Northern Ireland; April 30: Germany v Ukraine; Armenia v Northern Ireland; May 7: Ukraine v Armenia; June 7: Portugal v Albania; Ukraine v Germany; Portugal v Armenia; June 11: Armenia v Albania; Sept 10: Albania v Northern Ireland; Germany v Armenia; Oct 11: Germany v Armenia; Portugal v Northern Ireland; Armenia v Ukraine.

GROUP SEVEN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Holland	3	2	0	1	10	5	6
Belgium	3	2	0	1	5	7	6
Wales	3	2	0	1	10	6	6
Turkey	3	1	1	1	8	2	3
San Marino	3	0	0	3	2	21	0

RESULTS: San Marino 0 Wales 5; Wales 6 San Marino 0; Belgium 1 Turkey 1; Wales 1 Holland 3; San Marino 0 Belgium 3; Holland 7 Wales 1; Turkey 7 San Marino 0.

MATCHES TO COME: Today: Belgium v Holland; Wales v Turkey; March 28 1997: Wales v Belgium; Holland v San Marino; April 5: Turkey v Holland; April 30: San Marino v Holland; Turkey v Belgium; June 7: Belgium v San Marino; Aug 20: Turkey v Wales; Sept 8: Holland v Belgium; Sept 10: San Marino v Turkey; Oct 11: Holland v Turkey; Belgium v Wales.

10p

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Gough's efforts swing victory England's way



Little put under pressure to sell Townsend

By RICHARD HOBSON AND PETER BALL

BRIAN LITTLE, the Aston Villa manager, will face a dilemma over Andy Townsend, his club captain, in the days ahead. He has already turned down a bid of £750,000 from Celtic for Townsend, the Ireland midfielder, but, while insisting that he does not want to sell any of his first team, will find it harder to refuse another offer from the club.

Townsend, 33, moves out of contract at the end of the season and has been offered a one-year extension by Little. However, Celtic are prepared to agree to a two-year deal with the prospect of the fee being decided by a tribunal if a move takes place in the summer.

Tommy Burns, the Celtic manager, is understood to be prepared to bid as high as £1 million for Townsend. Burns may attempt to set up a deal involving Pierre van Hooijdonk, his unsettled Holland international striker, who Villa have watched on a number of occasions this season.

Ian Woan, the Nottingham Forest midfielder, who has interested Tottenham Hotspur and Everton, is staying at the City Ground, Frank Clark, the Forest manager, said yesterday.

Bryan Robson, the Middlesbrough manager, yesterday emerged from a lunchtime meeting at the Riverside Stadium with Emerson, and his hitherto unhappy wife, to announce that the errant Brazilian is back in the fold and will play his first Premiership game for seven weeks at Anfield this afternoon.



Townsend: in demand

"Things look a lot better, and hopefully today has resolved a lot of problems," Robson said. "Andrea is 100 per cent committed to giving it a go here."

Not even a snowstorm halfway through the meeting to remind her of what a North Eastern winter entails had undermined that resolve. "It is all a bit strange to her, she has never seen snow before," Robson said. "She's a lovely girl, but she is young, and has never been out of Brazil before, not even for a holiday."

The news that an escape to Barcelona was not on the cards may have contributed to Emerson's decision to stay, but Middlesbrough, for their part, are making efforts to help to solve his wife's feelings of isolation.

They are also investigating the possibility of signing Fabinho, Emerson's 20-year-old cousin, who is married to Andrea's sister.

Fabinho, a defender, has been staying with Emerson for two months, on an extended holiday, and training with Middlesbrough every day — even while Emerson himself was AWOL.

Sutton strikes back, page 43
Naked ambition, page 41

Coach needs answers before five nations' championship



Underwood, training with the England squad at Roehampton yesterday, can see the opportunity to re-establish himself at international level. Photograph: Rebecca Naden

England have points to prove

By DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

THE honeymoon for England's refurbished rugby union team ends at Twickenham this afternoon. When the players reassemble next, it will be for five nations' business, where there is a championship to defend and places in the British Isles touring party to be won. Life will become more cut-throat.

Not that Argentina, opponents in the Save and Prosper International this afternoon, intend to offer merely another stepping-stone to the latest generation of ambitious, bright-eyed England players. Yet there is a lack of continuity in the one-off internationals that England play before Christmas, as opposed to the edge — historic as well as sporting — that the five nations' championship provides.

That is where the series played overseas, be they three matches between Lions and Springboks, between All Blacks and Wallabies, create such drama and offer such high stakes. Touring teams here have no such gradual build-up, even during the days when a grand slam of victories over the four home unions was on offer, a situation that the

Rugby Football Union's planners are addressing.

This will also be the last opportunity for Jack Rowell, the England coach, to evaluate certain key players — Mike Catt at stand-off half, Chris Sheasby at No 8, for example — before determining the substance of the XV to do duty in the five nations. Nobody will be more aware of that than Catt himself. Passed fit yesterday after a blow to the chest, Catt will be aware of the pressures that continue to haunt him, seeking an all-round game that, thus far, he has been unable to offer in the pivotal position.

It could be argued, if only for the sake of making a point, that all four teams who have visited England this autumn are better-blessed at No 10: Elton Flatley, of Queensland, Louis Koen, of South Africa A, and Earl Vaa, of Western Samoa, have all displayed qualities apparently beyond the capabilities of English practitioners, while Gonzalo Quesada has lacked little in that respect in his four appearances for Argentina on tour.

Alex Wyllie, the Argentinians' technical coach, believes Quesada to be a much-improved player, even though opposition has not been of the

first rank. Built on stronger lines than some of his predecessors, he also possesses an accurate boot, which has made him the party's leading points-scorer.

England, however, will be a different proposition. A scratch England A side proved capable of mastering an Argentina XV — including five of the team today — at Northampton on Tuesday and there will be some expectation

among an anticipated crowd of 55,000 (tickets will be available today) of a victory as comfortable as the 54-21 success over Italy last month.

If only by accident, England look better blessed for pace and guile than they were on their last outing, against the New Zealand Barbarians. The restoration of Jeremy Guscott and Tony Underwood to the back division accounts for that and both men will seek to

create a situation where they cannot be omitted in the new year.

The same opportunity falls to Nick Beal, who may care to remember that Paul Hull looked to have established himself at full back in the winter of 1994, before Catt came along to oust him. Beal's chance arises only because of injury to Tim Stimpson, but, like Stimpson, Beal has waited long for his opportunity; he is old enough, too, to exercise discretion, but that he can act as a strike runner is not in doubt. Like Stimpson, he has a breadth of stride that does not immediately suggest speed, until opponents struggle to reach him; unlike Stimpson, he has a willowy swerve and sidestep honed in sevens tournaments, which could serve him well today.

Underwood's play this season reflects a new-found contentment in the North East. "I couldn't be happier that I am at the moment," he said after training at a damp, raw Roehampton. "I had to get out of the City. I've embraced the professional life. I love the people and the club at Newcastle and I think I'm playing as well as ever." He knows well, however, that come February, the injured

Adedayo Adebayo will want his place on the left wing back and that the management will have to decide once and for all upon their optimum midfield.

The pack, by contrast, appears a settled unit, although they will receive a serious examination in the set-pieces from Argentina. The England squad have watched videos of their opponents shunting South Africa in Buenos Aires, they respect the established second-row pairing of Pedro Sporleder and German Llanes (both of whom played in Argentina's last international at Twickenham, the 51-0 defeat of 1990) and they are aware of the qualities of Rolando Martin, the flanker, who has regularly scored against international opponents.

Lisandro Arbizu, the Argentina captain and centre, is keen to demonstrate that his country can produce backs with flair rather than the tight forwards for whom Argentina is renowned. "We must believe in ourselves and show we can play against anyone," he said, eager to forget the half-century posted by England six years ago when two of England's seven tries came from Guscott. A repeat performance today would do his case for retention no harm at all.

TODAY'S TEAMS AT TWICKENHAM

ENGLAND

N D Beal (Northampton)
J M Slightholme (Bath)
W D C Carling (Harlequins)
J C Guscott (Bath)
T Underwood (Newcastle)
M J Catt (Bath)
A C T Gormsall (Wasps)
G C Rowntree (Leicester)
M P Ragan (Bristol)
J Leonard (Harlequins)
T A K Rodder (Northampton)
M O Johnson (Leicester)
S D Shaw (Bristol)
L B N Dallaglio (Wasps)
C M A Sheasby (Wasps)

Referee: T Henning (South Africa)
REPLACEMENTS: 16 J E B Callard (Bath), 17 A D King (Wasps), 18 K P P Bracken (Saracens), 19 B B Clarke (Richmond), 20 R J K Hardwick (Coventry), 21 P B T Greening (Gloucester)

ARGENTINA

E Jurado (Jockey Rosario)
G Camardón (Alumni)
E Simone (Lions Naval)
L Arbizu (Belgrano)
D Albanese (SIC)
G Quesada (Hindú)
N Fernandez Miranda (Hindú)
T Grau (Lions)
C Promarzio (Quedados)
M Reggiardo (Castres)
R Martin (SIC)
P Sporleder (Curupayti)
G Llanes (La Plata)
P Camerlinckx (Regatas BV)
P Bouza (Atletico Rosario)

TV: BBC1: 2.55pm
REPLACEMENTS: 18 F Sola (Tala), 17 F Garcia (Alumni), 18 C Barria (Cordoba), 19 M Sotelo (Berco Hipotecario), 20 O Hasan Jall (Gimnasia), 21 R Perez (Quedados)

Growing acclaim leaves Bruno's future blooming



Just as one swallow does not make a summer, a defeat by Mike Tyson does not make a winter of discontent for Frank Bruno. Big Frank will be back next summer. It will be a Frank Bruno you have never seen before.

From the topmost penthouse roof garden to the lowly basement garden flat, from the cottage garden to the wall garden, it will be Bruno, Bruno, right up to August.

Know what I mean? Forget the record books and the 40 and five (his boxing record) stuff. Bruno has been immortalised as a flower. Impatiens Bruno Fl hybrid, he is, better known to hanging basket experts as the busy Lizzie. It is a half-hardy annual but, like Grace Fields's aspidistra,

Srikumar Sen discovers another seedy side to boxing, but finds everyone is potty about this budding champion

"the biggest busy Lizzie in the world."

In the words of Thompson and Morgan, of Ipswich — the seed sellers — it is "big and beefy". This Frank Bruno is strong and durable for tough conditions. According to the catalogue, it is "the world's first tetraploid impatiens, the reason for its extra vigour". The flowers are 2½ inches across and come in stunning colours: red, orange, salmon, rose, blue, violet and white.

Floranova Ltd, of Dereham, Norfolk — the growers — can clearly

expect a big turnover. It will be launched in the spring and it should not be long before everyone is asking for a bunch of Brunos.

Sports Illustrated, the prestigious American magazine, mentioned this new flower in its section entitled, "This Week's Sign that the Apocalypse is Upon Us". It said: "A variety of impatiens being sold in the Thompson and Morgan seed catalog — 'stunning large flowers' that come in 'scintillating bright colors' have 'extra vigour' and are 'easy to handle' — is named after the British

heavyweight, Frank Bruno." Since Americans do not have a high regard for British heavyweights and never tire of making jokes about them, I asked *Sports Illustrated* if it was trying to tell us something about our national hero.

"Oh no," Jack McCallum, one of the editors in charge of the page, said, "we just thought it was so incongruous to have a flower named after a fighter that it was worth putting in the magazine. We talked about it and thought it would have been better if the flower had been named after a more brutish fighter, like Mike Tyson or Andrew Golota."

Clearly the Americans don't know too much about how our mums and dads see Britain's favourite son.

enough to play at this level," Botham said. "Mark believes I am worth this contract and I am determined to prove him right."

Unlike his father, who played occasional League football for Scunthorpe United as well as representing England in 102 Test matches, he is to concentrate on one sport.

However, Tony Baker, the Hampshire chief executive, said that he thought that Liam had made the decision too early. "I cannot see any reason in principle why he cannot play both cricket and rugby if that's what he needs to do and everyone is agreeable," he said. "I would not be 100 per cent happy to see him playing rugby union ahead of cricket if he was my son, because the chances of him suffering a serious injury are so high, especially when you consider his surname."

"All it will take is for some lumbering great forward who fancies getting his name in the papers to have a go at him and his career could be finished."

However, Ring believes it is "virtually impossible" to now combine summer and winter sports at a professional level.

England triumph, page 42
West Indies toil, page 42



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CASTELLBLANCH - CONDE DE CARALT - FREIXENET - SEGURA VIUDAS

SATURDAY DECEMBER 14 1996



Smart route to the Lord

We had been told to look for a sign from Jesus: a coincidence, anything like that, would do.

Waiting at the traffic lights outside the church of Holy Trinity Brompton, was a black London taxi. Inside, the driver asked: "Have you been to HTBT. On the 26th of August?" The answer to both questions was yes. "Is Nicky Gumbel still running it? He's a very charismatic figure," Mr. Gumbel had been discussing coincidences with us, a group of new Christians, a few minutes earlier. "I did that," continued the driver, "and joined the church. Brought along my guitar and played music with them." He turned again: "They are typocrites and phoney's."

Tomorrow the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, will visit HTB, as the church is universally known, and give his blessing to the extraordinary Alpha course which has brought to Jesus thousands of unlikely souls: the beautiful,

the young, the rich; wretched old murderers rotting in jail. Sandy Millar, the vicar, chose a curious phrase during Sunday worship last month when announcing Dr Carey's visit. "He is on our side," Mr Millar assured the congregation. "He is a friend."

The Alpha course began at HEB in 1979 and has spread with astonishing speed in the past three years, reaching 380,000 people in 55 countries. It is controversial.

The harshest criticism is that this beginners' guide to Christianity is too concerned with instant supernatural signs as evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit: in particular, the miraculous "gift of tongues".

Since joining the Alpha course in October, I have watched healthy young adults degenerate into a helpless mass of quivers, jerks, babbles and moans befitting a victim of a cruel degenerative illness.

The congregation believe they are saving England's capital for Jesus. Mr Millar tells

They are young, professional, good-looking — and they have found God in droves. Dominic Kennedy signed up to discover the allure of an Alpha course

them: "The enemy is devouring and destroying London." Simon Downham, a younger priest, illustrating a letter of Paul to the Corinthians, informs worshippers that ancient Corinth had many places of worship, including a temple with 1,000 prostitutes. The city was a cross between New York, Los Angeles and Las Vegas. "Strangely like contemporary London," he told us.

The latest Alpha course began ten weeks ago. Six hundred people crowded into HTB. The most striking thing about the worshippers is their youth. Most are in their twenties and only a handful are older than 35. The next shock: they are physically attractive, quite unlike the sad, Bible-bashing God Squad types you

remember from college days who hovered around the Christian fellowship because they could not make friends. Also, many are very rich.

The ecumenical course, which is free, consists of ten evenings of talks, plus a residential weekend. This formula has been so successful that HTB has imposed a copyright on the name "Alpha" in relation to Christian courses.

For the first time, we heard Mr Gumbel, the curate, speak. His subject: "Who is Jesus?" Mr Gumbel, like many of the clergy at HTB, is a lawyer who saw the light and became a priest. He is a compelling speaker. Gently, he demolishes people's doubts, beginning by presenting evidence that the Bible is an authentic account of

historical events, far more reliable than other classical texts. Seventy-five minutes into the evening he is interrupted by the first mobile phone going off in the congregation.

He moves on. Quoting from the New Testament, he points to the unparalleled eminence of Christ's teaching and the 530 witnesses who saw the resurrected Jesus. He relies heavily on the devastatingly powerful arguments of C.S. Lewis that Christ must have been just what He said — the Son of God — or else mad or bad. By the end of the evening, many in the church were well on their way to accepting that He was God.

Cardinal Hume, we were told, had just approved the Alpha course, following painstaking study by Roman Catho-

lic theologians. A wise move. A third of the people there seemed to be lapsed Catholics, including me.

So it continued weekly. First we ate, then stood to sing cheerful hymns led by a "rock group". People clapped, many held up their arms and swayed. The mood was ecstatic. Next Mr Gumbel would lecture us with modern parables, funny and heartbreaking, all expertly chosen to advance his case.

Finally, we had an evangelical form of "group therapy". Split into huddles of ten, we discussed our spiritual journeys, prayed and exchanged confidences. In these groups, people told near-strangers, sometimes through tears, about addictions, childhood abuse, abortions.

Mr Gumbel's argument progressed relentlessly and the direction was becoming clearer. In our Bibles, we were steered to those books dealing with the lives of the apostles — Acts, of course, but also, the letters of Paul to the Romans,

Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Thessalonians. The emphasis was on miracles, healing, prophecy.

Meanwhile, people were scrambling towards God. Many on the course work in the City of London, dealing this, broking that. One such businessman confessed he had said his night-time prayers for the first time in 20 years. They were answered. At 3am he had awoken with the words, "Buy *The Economist* magazine," ringing in his head. That morning he followed the mysterious advice and found that the journal contained an article about a career change he had been dithering over for a long time. Surely this was a sign from God.

Our experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit was to take place in the unlikely setting of Pontin's holiday camp at Chichester, West Sussex, down the appropriately-named

Continued on page 2

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This looks like being the worst Christmas ever. Not because of commercialism, or because everyone is forgetting the little baby Jesus, or because people are more likely than ever to divorce, murder and commit suicide. But because of the clichés.

It is the very act of blaming the decline of Christmas on commercialism, irreligiosity and the breakdown of family values that is ruining it. Not the commercialism, irreligiosity or collapsed morals, *per se*. Take, for example, the "goodwill" detectives patrolling Selfridges in search of customers being nice to their fellow men, and rewarding them with cases of wine, meals and gift tokens. Nice idea, you suppose. For you are enslaved by the "Christmas shop-

ping is hell" cliché. But how much the worse will it end up if thousands of people descend on Oxford Street, intent on remunerative selfishness? "After you, sir." "No, no. After you..."

You will not be able to move for the scrums of shoppers fighting to let each other through doors in the hope of winning a bottle of plonk. And when these snakes in the grass discover that you are not, after all, a planted victim laden with prizes, they are liable to haul you back through the door and demand some other recompense for their wasted politeness.

The identification of the cliché causes the misery, you see, not the cliché itself. A similar thing is at work in *Jingle All The Way*. Here, you are invited to spend seven quid watching the world's most expen-

SERIOUS SHOPPING

sive actor having a Christmas shopping nightmare. Not only do you have to do it, you have to watch Arnie doing it, too. And yet Schwarzenegger is not attempting to solve the cliché any more than Selfridges, merely to perpetuate it for profit. Like the charlatans selling wooden tree decorations on the back of the "Christmas is so tacky nowadays" cliché.

The thing about the Christmas shopping truism, though, is that while it may be unpleasant for you, the customer, it is billions of blue blistering barnacle times worse for the people who work in the shops. When I worked at Harrods in 1987 — where Christ-



BY GILES COREN

mas shoppers go to die — I earned £3.13 an hour (before tax) with half an hour's unpaid lunch break, and all I did was field complaints from people who were going to be out of

CHRISTMAS STAFF

the hellhole in a few minutes anyway. Give the staff a break. They are 18, they have no choice but to work there, they do not know how to work the till, or where the loos are, and what is more, they do not care. It is not their fault it is Christmas.

So when you ask to pay £17.33 in gift vouchers, £29 on Access, and the balance on your House of Fraser storecard and the boy at the till bursts into tears, do not tell him that Harrods is not what it was. Neither are you. These staff are nicer than you, poorer than you, and having a much worse time. Likewise, when a spotty girl says she doesn't know the name of the

toy that your nephew saw on telly, which might have ended in "ornia" but was almost certainly purple, do not tell her her life is going nowhere. She is only saving up to go to Thailand before starting her astrophysics course at Cambridge, and she is probably quite sensitive about her spots, and may even believe that you could have her sacked because you once met Mohammed Al Fayed at one of Jonathan Aitken's parties.

Nor is it fun, by the way, to work on commission in designer clothes shops. So do not lose your temper when a young man asks if he can help you. He will not be even slightly impressed that you are well aware he is on commission, and quite frankly he can take his Uriah Heapish obsequiousness elsewhere. He is paid practically

nothing, and will only get his commission for the month if he reaches a certain target (at Ralph Lauren in 1991 it was about a million shirts an hour). He works an 11-hour day. He has been driven mad by Nat King Cole's Christmas album playing over and over on a 50-minute loop, so that the very words "Jack Frost nipping at your nose" will drive him into a cold sweat for the rest of his life.

And he would much rather you just bogged off and left him in peace. But, since you are there, you serve no purpose at all unless you pull out your wallet and give him a pile of shirts to put against his staff number, so that he can eat next year.

Christmas shopping a nightmare? Bah, humbug.

DES JENSON

It's in the pan

■ FINDING the right pan or pot can be tricky. Stick to quality and try the catering trade supply shops — their prices can be lower than expected.

■ Stainless steel is all the rage, and justly so. Chefs prefer the shiny metal to aluminium because it does not react with acidic food, the metal cleans quickly and tomatoes, fruit and wine sauces cook free of any tinny taste. Black metal looks good, is non-stick and never rusts.

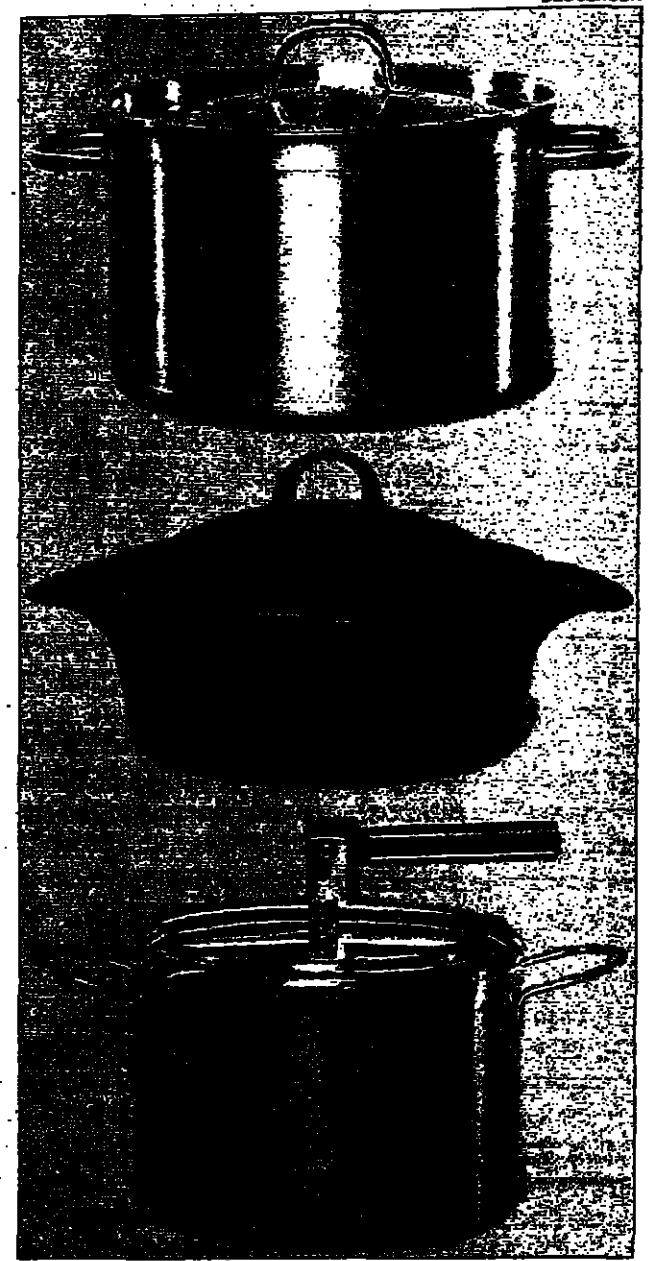
■ Sue Parker serves a top-of-the-range mixture.



Three-tier stainless steel "Hackman" combines a saucepan, steamer and porringer and a compartment for keeping things warm. Available in various sizes, from £51 from Dexham International (stockists, 01428 658888)



Copper pan, left, £105.25, and chicken pan £32, from David Mellor (0171-730 4259). Black, saucepan, £35, Jerry's Home Store (0171-581 0909). Black steel 24cm frying pan, £20.90, from Staines Catering Supplies (0171-437 8424)



Boonest stainless steel stew pan, £64.60 from Staines Catering Supplies, as before. Chunky cast iron Gourmet casserole, £26, from Ikea (0181-208 5600). Ativa stainless steel pressure cooker, £75, from Habitat (0645 334433).

Continued from page 1
Clappers Lane. HTB is the only place where people pay for a Pontin's weekend with a Courts chequebook kept in the pocket of a Harrods overcoat. The church overwhelmingly attracts middle-class and successful people because it recruits by word of mouth in places such as the City.

By now these people, superficially so privileged, were

beginning to strip away their veneers. The picture editor of *The Sunday Telegraph*, Nigel Skelsey, told movingly how he had been a teaboy on a photographic magazine when his father died. Mr Skelsey, who had always felt an enormous failure to his parents, became the editor two weeks later. "My father would have been enormously proud of that," he said. "The sense of

frustration that he wasn't there to see it was crushing." How unbearably painful was the grief Mr Skelsey carried for 15 years, acting tough and earning the nickname "The Beast" until a friend prayed with him and sobbing his heart out, he found Christ.

Mr Gumbel led a session entitled "How can I be filled with the Spirit?" He encouraged us to be like emotional

Hebrews, ready to accept the gift of "tongues", a supernatural language which would help us to communicate with God. "God," he said, "is not English."

Mr Gumbel asked us to put our hands out. He prayed: "Fill us with your Spirit", then described aloud what he saw. "The Spirit of God has come and is filling people all around the room. Some people are shaking. Some of you feel a great weight on your hands. Others, tears are rolling down your face and you are thinking, 'Why am I crying?' That is the Spirit of God, don't be embarrassed. Don't resist the Spirit. Some of you feel waves coming over you. Waves and waves of liquid love..."

We were invited to sing in tongues. What should have been a cacophonous babble sounded strangely melodic and beautiful, the men's deep voices washed over by the rising spontaneous harmonies of the women, the words meaningless. Like a Turkish ballad, exotic but not completely alien. Around the room, people were crying. One woman was gripped by a violent seizure which rocked her body back and forth.

Back at HTB, the course developed a new urgency. Mr Millar lectured us on the existence of the Devil. Next week we were told how important it was to spread the Good News. The following week was a healing session. We were told to lay hands on each other and pray for cures. "In this church men pray with men and women with women. We don't want to bring the faith into disrepute," said Jeremy Jennings of the pastoral team. "We must be as cunning as snakes and as innocent as doves."

Mr Gumbel received a letter from a murderer on the Alpha course at prison in Portland, Dorset. The man, who had been beaten and sexually abused as a child, agreed to let two Christians pray with him in the jail. "I held my eyes tightly shut," he wrote. "After a couple of minutes a bright light came in from my right side, then disappeared, and I felt relaxed and at peace with my mind for the first time in 50 years."

So what of coincidence? Obvious miracles are rare in our times so HTB encourages followers to believe that coincidences are signs from God. An article in the church's newspaper describes a solicitor's conversion after a "remarkable series" of "coincidences". Among these were: her gas

"In this church, men pray with men and women with women. We don't want to bring the faith into disrepute. We must be as pure as doves"

Pastoral worker

"I shut my eyes and a bright light came in from my right side, then disappeared, and I felt relaxed and at peace in my mind for the first time in 50 years"

Convicted murderer

breaking down so she had to have a bath at a Christian friend's home, and a Christian coming to talk to her after thinking she was waving when she was in fact adjusting her spectacles.

What should I make of a taxi driver who chanced to be stationary on one of London's busiest streets, directly outside the church, and warned me against HTB? Mr Millar, in his sermon about the Devil, told us of a girl returning from her Alpha weekend to receive a telephone call from a former boyfriend. She realised it was Satan trying to tempt her.

By the church's own logic, this encounter cannot have been an accident. So who sent the stranger to warn me away from HTB, the Holy Spirit or the Devil? The trouble is, I believe it was just a coincidence.

For details of courses, write to the Alpha Department, Holy Trinity Brompton, Brompton Road, London SW7 1UA (0171-590 8273).

Cover photograph and pictures on the right by PETER NICHOLLS

THE EVIDENCE: HOW ALPHA WORKED

PHOTOGRAPHER



MELINDA WELLS, 26, believes she has been healed by the Holy Spirit. A wedding photographer, she had been suffering from ME for three years and went to the home of another church member to pray. The next morning she woke to find her symptoms had gone: the aching knee and shoulder joints which doctors had mistaken for arthritis, the fluid around her eyes, the exhaustion.

"I had been feeling like a dead person," she says. "I was sleeping during the day and watching my life disappear. My friend prayed and God came into that environment and healed me. I have been given my life back. It is quite incredible."

Miss Wells had sought cures through conventional medicine, homeopathy, dietetics, aromatherapy, Chinese healing and acupuncture. She is now sparkling with energy and waking early. The pained expression that one could see on her face at the beginning of the course has gone.

"I have been given my life back. It is quite incredible"

CLUB OWNER

PAUL COWLEY, 41, runs Champneys, the exclusive sports club in London's West End. When friends ask how he can be a Christian and wear a Rolex, he tells them: "My walk with God doesn't mean that I have to wear sackcloth."

Four years ago, a preacher first "laid hands" on him and prayed. "My hands started to shake a bit. I am not a shaker, I am quite a controlled guy," Mr Cowley says. "Now I know that was God touching me by His Spirit."

After being guided towards Alpha, he married his girlfriend and found the strength to write to the son he had walked out on when the boy was three, and to his elderly father from whom he was estranged for years.

The boy, now a teenager, works at Harrods and has come to live with his father. Mr Cowley, who spent time in a remand centre for theft in his youth, helps run Alpha at prisons, including Dartmoor.



"Walking with God doesn't mean wearing sackcloth"

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Designers go hell for leather

Forget heavy metal bands and bikers. This season's leather gets back to its cool roots with clean cuts in chocolate and toffee colours. **Grace Bradberry reports**

Leather has always been a material with attitude — often bad attitude. Since the 1950s it has been associated with youth rebellion, and the striking of a cool pose.

Olivia Newton John wore it in *Grease* when she wanted to impress John Travolta. James Dean made it his own. But it also has more dubious associations with heavy metal bands, biker culture and the sort of men who think sewing beer mats to their jeans is a style statement.

But leather still does have attitude — if it's cut lean, mean and tassel-free. This season the styles may be retro, but uncluttered silhouettes are making leather fashionably wearable again.

Clean tailoring has been applied to everything, from lightweight shirts to sleeveless shift dresses, as well as jeans and bootcut trousers. (Thankfully, it's a far cry from the fringed 1980s boleros with silver and suede metallic patchwork designs and a micro mini to match.)

When you buy leather it's important to recognise the look or era that has inspired it. Svelte hard-line trench coats evoke the spirit of 1930s Berlin, but they need to be teamed with knee-length skirts or lean trousers to complete the effect. Agnès b has a pared-down shift with clear 1960s influences. Jigsaw's tan double-breasted pea-coat and Naf Naf's zip-up cropped jacket are reminiscent of a 1970s chase movie — *Starsky and Hutch* rampaging in the streets, their leather jackets distressed by fights with criminals.

Of course, leather will always be associated with bikers and Michael Jackson in his "Bad" phase. High street chains, however, are relegating fashion frivolities to PVC and concentrating on quality leather classics with a wearable edge.

French Connection's leather pieces may appear expensive at £399 for a coat and £289 for a jacket, but Jill Read, the company's merchandising controller, says its customers are willing to pay more for top-quality leather that carries through from season to season. On the back of its success, key shops will feature leather in chocolate, beige and camel throughout the summer and well into their winter 1997-98 range.

This shift into other colours has been a key factor in making leather chic again. There's nothing wrong with black, and it's a good season straddler, but it needs to be chosen carefully or it can look like something Del and Rodney might sell on their market



LEATHER appeared in abundance on the catwalks this season. Many designers diverged from the simple, sleek, black leather coat and experimented with trimmings, texture and colour. Coats were edged in fur on collars and cuffs by the Italian label Callaghan (above), while Donna Karan's DKNY label (below) showed belted military jackets with epaulette detailing, worn-in waisted jackets and 1970s pea-coats in rustic reds and olive.



stall. Chocolate leather may seem a one-season wonder, but it has proved such a hit that it now looks a sure bet for summer too. The sweet-wrapper colours of last year are giving way to chocolate truffle, toffee and caramel shades, which all work well in leather.

For those whose confidence matches their wallet size, there are a few outfits among the browns and blacks which may add a touch of vibrance to an already pallid winter wardrobe. Distressed burgundy and olive double-breasted jackets from DKNY, or

Whistles' vivid violet cropped shell tops and matching maxi skirts, or Jigsaw's smooth almond jackets all catch the light wonderfully.

But beware: add a little city grime and everyday dirt, and what started out as a shade of cerise can be transformed into dull pigeon grey. With expensive and often delicate soft leather, scratching and staining is all too easy.

French Connection has a number of tips to offer. The first is to use a good waterproof spray before you step outside the door — one freak rainstorm can have disastrous and irreversible effects.

For a sudden spill, you can use a damp cloth, although every now and then you'll also need to send the piece to a specialist dry cleaners for a full make-over.

The final tip is only for the brave: the old wives' tale of soaking your leather for one and a half minutes in a lukewarm bath of salt and vinegar to remove stains apparently does also work.

Additional research by Deborah Brett.



ABOVE: Black leather trousers, £128, from The Gap, selected branches nationwide (0800 427788). Black and brown striped mohair jumper by Amaya Acunaga, £100, from Harvey Nichols, SW1 (0171-734 0123). Boots by Armando Pollini, 35 Brook Street, W1 (0171-629 7606).

RIGHT: Black leather jacket, £520, by Agnès b, 111 Fulham Road, SW3 (0171-235 3477). Cream sleeveless Merino wool poloneck, £84, by John Smedley, from a selection at Selfridges, W1 (0171-580 5075).



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ABOVE: Distressed tan leather pea-coat, £350, by Jigsaw, 126 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-491 4484). Copper skinny-rib poloneck, £40, by French Connection, 249 Regent Street, W1 (0171-580 2507). Chocolate brown trousers, £27.50, from Miss Selfridge, 221 Oxford Street, W1 (0181-910 1359).

LEFT: Navy leather single-breasted trench coat, £399, and matching knee-length skirt, £130, both by French Connection (as before); navy cashmere ribbed poloneck, £149, by Brora, 344 King's Road, SW3 (0171-352 3697). Gold sequin belt, £39, by Otto Glantz at Fenwick's, 63 New Bond St, W1. Black elastic knee boots, £195, by Armando Pollini (as before).

Photographer: Steve Poole. Stylist: Deborah Brett. Hair and make-up: Helen Bannion at Mandy Coakley. Model: Karlne Develay at Models One. Catwalk photographs by Chris Moore.



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GARDEN ANSWERS

STEPHEN ANDERTON
replies to readers' letters

Q Basil is susceptible to infestation and even destruction by fly. Are there any insecticides which can be used, given that the leaves may be eaten shortly after spraying? — T. Innes, Betchworth, Surrey.

A There are insecticides you can use on fruit and vegetables which are shortly to be eaten. Many have a don't-eat-by period that is as short as one day. You either trust it or you don't. Look out for active ingredients such as permethrin, malathion, rotenone and quassia, but always check on the packet how long has to be left before eating. Basil, like many another plant, is less susceptible to fly when grown outdoors. If you hate to spray, outdoors is safer for basil, even though there are more pests around.

Q Late this autumn I planted a *Campsis radicans* and a *Freemontodendron* against the front, southwest-facing wall of my house. What are their chances of surviving the winter, and how should I protect them? Also, is the *Campsis* self-clinging or does it require support? — J. Whittaker, Tring, Herts.

A Nothing risked, nothing gained. They will both grow at Tring. I am sure, although they are on the tender side. The *Freemontodendron*, a yellow-flowered Californian shrub, is easier to flower and can be grown tight to the wall. *Campsis*, the trumpet vine, needs a lot of heat to do well. It produces aerial roots which will cling to brickwork, but extra support is also needed to stop those long stems unpeeling from the wall in wind. Late autumn is a poor time to plant tender species because they have no time to establish before the trials of winter. May or June is better, but never mind. It is best to erect a shelter over your plants, either of netting or sacking on canes. Protect the roots from frost with a coarse mulch. If it snows, don't let the ice melt onto the new roots, shovel it away before the thaw.

Q Our 100-year-old yew hedge has been colonised by ivy, and the gaps in the middle of the hedge house a sturdy colony of it. I feel it should be

removed, but would appreciate your advice. Is it colonising because the hedge is dying, or vice versa? — G. Bateman, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

A Do try to remove it — if you can. It will be a foul, filthy job, fighting your way into the old hedge. The greatest risk to your hedge from ivy is that of being shaded out, as the ivy reaches the top and smothers the yew growth. If you keep the ivy under control it will not kill the hedge. On the other hand, your hedge is probably dying out because it is very old and underfed: it is easy prey for the ivy. Remove the ivy now, then next spring feed the hedge with dried blood and a mulch of manure. Watch it recover for a year or two, before deciding whether you need to go down the serious road of cutting the hedge back to the trunks, to regenerate it. It may be that this is the only way of refilling major cavities in its canopy.

Q I want to buy an evergreen clematis. What species are readily available, and where can I find them? — B. Smith, Mansfield, Notts.

A Evergreen clematis are available, but they do not fit into the general pattern of clematis, and cannot be used in the same way. *Clematis armandii* is the best evergreen, with large leaves, and grows vigorously to 30ft, similar to *Clematis montana*. It is not as hardy as most clematis, and needs a sheltered position. Without this, the leaves will look desperately shabby by spring which defeats the object of being evergreen. *Clematis cirrhosa* is a slender but not very vigorous species suitable for climbing a pillar or low wall. It flowers in winter too, with small creamy flowers spotted red-purple inside. 'Freckles' is a good flowering form, and *C. balearica* is slightly more vigorous, with fernier foliage. Any of the mail-order clematis specialists will sell these varieties.

Q Readers should write to: Garden Answers, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9RN. We regret that it may not be possible to deal with every request. Advice is offered without legal responsibility. The Times also regrets that any enclosures cannot be returned.

Stephen Anderton on how to make a raised garden, even from the fixtures of an old cider mill

Converting an old mill into a garden provides great locations, such as this old apple trough that makes a perfect setting for petunias, *Helichrysum petiolar* and *Impatiens*

Cider with posies is so sweet

Watering pots and troughs is a chore. And the smaller and shallower they are the more often it has to be done. But if you put in the right plants, you can at least have interesting results and keep the watering to a minimum.

I once looked after a garden that had a tall wall with a string of very shallow stone troughs for cisterns. There was perhaps only 3in of space for soil, and even then the cavity had a lip at one side to drain it. Anything planted there would have to love drought.

One good answer would have been to plant nothing. Mine was to fill the troughs with a mixture of peat and cow manure in equal parts and plant the troughs with low, hardy succulents such as stonecrop or houseleeks. It gave an interesting top to the wall without detracting from its visual strength.

The peat and manure mixture is excellently gluey, as well as nutritious, and can be used even on sloping roofs for attaching clumps of houseleeks to the tiles.

A friend of mine has recently restored an old cider mill which stood in her garden. Its wooden beams, to which the horse was fastened, were sagged and decayed, and the building over it had long gone. She had gardened it for years, filling the shallow ring-shaped trough in which the apples were crushed with herbs such as lavender and cosmos, which would stand drought.

But couch grass found its way in, and the wooden beams threatened finally to fall to pieces. The structure now stands thoroughly renewed, in oak as before, and ready for another 100 years.

But what to plant in the apple trough? There is only 9in of depth to the trough, although the whole circle is perhaps 7ft in diameter and must contain a reasonable volume. The vertical apple-crushing stone, which the horse drove around the trough, is still there but fixed.

Drainage, because the trough is made of four stones imperfectly bound together with iron, is excellent. It must leak like a cider-mill.

So what would I suggest? Herbs

again? No, it is all too smart now for a fuzzy, Laura Ashley capping of herbs. It is also a long way to lean into the middle of the trough to weed it, which is probably why it became full of weeds last time.

If you really piled the whole trough high with manure and old compost, you could get enough volume in there to grow grounds in it for a year, and train them up the woodwork to hang down like traitors' heads on a gibbet. It would be fun, but you would have to water it a lot.

But what if you wanted only a little watering and the trough filled with soil? I might be tempted to keep it clean and simple; to fill it with a massed planting of a low grass, perhaps, which would move in the wind and keep the sense of circular motion in the trough.

The yellow grass *Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola' is frequently recommended for pots. It grows to about 10in and stays looking pale and supple, if bleached, until February. Established plantings weave beautifully, like a field of barley ready for harvest. I would not want to use a

grass which stayed in tight, fan-shaped clumps. It would have to be one that would blend together to make a mat.

It would certainly be wise with any soft planting such as grasses to add a good quantity of water-retaining polymer (SwellGel or Broadleaf P4) to the bottom layer of compost, to ensure the trough did not dry out in case my watering was erratic. Everyone forgets now and then. But I would keep it to the bottom layer only, so that winter drainage around the necks of the plants was still good.

Sacrificing the sense of movement, it might be fun to try a mass planting of that grassy, black-leaved member of the lily family, *Ophiopogon planiscapus* 'Nigrescens', which grows to 5in and, if it would stand the heat, would certainly look remarkable. I like to see it massed, and it needs the contrast of stone or paving to make it show up. I saw a whole pudding stone rockery planned with it last year, which will develop into a black bank shot with white stones.

What about dwarf bulbs? It is probably too hot for them in summer. Or how about nerines to flower in autumn, a circle of shocking pink standing in the trough, and mulched with gravel? It is a thought, but it would only work in a milder climate or by the seaside. Inland they need the warmth of the ground in winter.

And what if I did no watering at all? The answer is to put a layer of old compost in the bottom of the trough, cover it with old newspapers, and then cap it with a sea of pebbles. Then puncture the simplicity with just two or three clumps of slate-grey houseleeks, planted to have contact with the compost layer below.

While very coarse, 2-3in rounded river gravel might do: there is something appealing about the idea of larger, rounded pebbles sitting in there, like a cargo of apples waiting to roll. It would be fun to arrange them so that the colour changed from larger and darker in front of the crushing stone to smaller and paler in the wake. Much more fun than herbs. Herbs you can have almost anywhere.

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Winter wonderlands

OPEN THIS WEEKEND

Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh.
Lothian (0131 552 7171)
In Inverleith Row, a mile north of city centre. Open daily, except December 25 and January 1, 10am-4pm to end of February; 10am-6pm in March, April, September, October; 10am-8pm in May to August. Entrance: free (voluntary contribution).

Scotland has produced generations of pioneering gardeners and so it is no surprise that Edinburgh's Royal Botanic Garden is one of the best in Britain. If there is an example of how a botanic garden should be more than just a collection of plants, it is here. Established in 1670, the garden has few rivals, but it was the move in 1820 that added the quality of the present position. There are sweeping views south to Edinburgh and north to the Scottish hills. Some legendary names from Scottish gardening history trained here, but perhaps more than most this is a botanic garden that combines research, rarity and quality with a genuine appeal even to a beginner.

Demonstration gardens illustrate what can be done at home and there is no better place to study the changing seasons. Trees and shrubs provide the winter highlights. In a garden whose 75 acres present such an array of plants, a first visit in winter offers a relatively simple picture that will only encourage you to return for richer feasts in spring and summer.

Longleat, Warminster, Wiltshire
(01985 844400)

On A362, three miles southwest of Warminster. Open daily, except December 25, 10am-4pm to March 16, then 10am-6pm to November 3. Entrance: £2, children 50p.

Longleat should be visited in winter. The formal garden to the south of the house was redesigned by Russell Page for the father of the present Marquess of Bath. The idea was to simplify a planting regime that had relied on 40,000 annual plants twice a year. Page's creation of clipped and yew hedges, lime walks and formal water leading to Wyarville's 18th-century orangery needs no flowers to enhance its formal elegance, especially as it is so well-matched to the architecture of this Renaissance masterpiece. Ever since it was built by Sir John Thynne, the great house has been the focus of ambitious gardens, some of which have come



Pond at Edinburgh Botanic Garden

and gone. But winter can also be the season to appreciate the house. The view from the beech woods along the ridge known as Heaven's Gate demonstrates Capability Brown's vision and skill in making the most of the natural setting. On a clear, frosty morning it is a never-to-be-forgotten experience, so arrive early.

Hackfall Wood, Grewelthorpe, North Yorkshire

Off A6108 Ripon to Masham, six miles northwest of Ripon. Open daily all year, dawn to dusk. Entrance: free.

There are few more fascinating examples of gardening from one generation to another than looking at Hackfall Wood, created by William Aislabie after his father, John, had made Studley Royal, the landscape masterpiece. By William's time the mood had moved on and he created landscape gardening that is rugged, picturesque and exciting.

A winter visit adds a seasonal quality to the 112 acres of woodland in a spectacular 350ft gorge of the River Ure — and encourages walking. From its creation the garden became renowned — Turner even painted it. But in recent decades it fell into decay until rescued by local admirers who have carried out a spirited restoration.

GEORGE PLUMPTRE

WEEKEND TIPS

- Put an open-ended cloche over clumps of Christmas roses (*Helleborus niger*) to produce clean, flowers with no soil splashes for picking. Pick flowers of *Iris lazica* and *unguicularis*.
- Apply tar oil wash to dormant fruit trees and bushes, to kill the eggs of next year's generations of aphids, sucker and scale insects.
- Keep indoor azaleas (*Azalea indica* varieties) in a cool room, especially at night (10°C is ideal), for a long display of flowers.
- Prune apples and pears (but not cherries and plums), and take any rotten, mummified fruits off the trees.

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The flowerpot men and their lookalikes

It is not a question of whether or not to take it so much as where to do it. Once, in the garden of a well-known designer, I found against a fine, 5ft high terracotta urn that stood on the terrace outside his drawing room. It, and I, thudded to the ground, shattering illusions as it went — it may have looked the part but it was made of fibreglass and weighed very little. It was a clever deception, but had been put in a place where it was going to be discovered too easily.

Lookalike bronze and terracotta pots have been perfected to such a degree that they are almost impossible to tell from the real thing, unless you touch them. The best idea is to use them where they are not likely to be brushed or leant against. To complete the deception, a real terracotta pot should be placed where it will be touched.

It is always best to use big pots as they make dramatic features, even in small gardens. Unfortunately, games of scale are not played nearly enough in British gardens. Or the pots could be planted with trees — anything smaller will only look fiddly.

I understand that the garden at Highgrove has been supplied with pots from the Old Bell Pottery, Lechlade, Gloucestershire, which has a selection of about 3,000, some of them sculpted or thrown on site by the owner/potter Keith Broley. Others on sale have been chosen from big and small suppliers in Britain and Europe, and all are well displayed in Mr Broley's garden of pots and topiary. Prices range from 22p for a standard flowerpot (5in high) to £450 for a 4ft 7in high decorated terracotta flowerpot.

The company Spanish Pots imports hand-cast tinajas, which were originally used for storing grain, wine or oil. The largest, 13ft high, costs £3,000 and is said to be one of the largest clay pots in the world. A pot just under 4ft high in the same style costs £475.

Their weathered looks and pleasing egg-shaped forms made a stunning display at this year's Hampton Court Flower Show. They would look best as garden ornaments rather than planters — what brave soul is going to drill drainage holes in a £3,000 pot?

The tinajas are said to be frost proof. As the owner of several

Terracotta pots — and realistic fakes — make dramatic features and are best bought in winter, says Jane Owen



Keith Broley at work on a ceramic jar at his pottery in Lechlade

beautiful but cracked "frost proof" pots that I cannot afford to replace, I am wary of all such claims.

But fake pots are almost always truly frost and heat proof — and they are relatively easy to move around. A 5ft high fake terracotta pot, for instance, weighs about 60kg, whereas the genuine article would weigh about 1.2 tonnes.

It is a good idea to buy a pot in the winter, particularly if you are planning to plant in them, because, once planted, they are almost impossible to move without heavy machinery. If you buy pots now you

can experiment with positions in the garden before planting.

Some fake pots from the Continent are made with built-in wheels, similar to those on beds or armchairs. It is a great idea which more manufacturers will no doubt take on board.

There is some stunning fake Italian terracotta on the market, moulded to look like antique urns and vases, but supplies are erratic so if you find a beautiful piece don't hesitate to buy. Capital Garden Products in East Sussex makes fake Cretan oil jars (3ft high, £428) and

Beehive jars (2ft 8in high, £346) which, like any of these large containers, are eye-catching as well as handy planters. But remember that they have to have drainage holes drilled in the bottom if they are to be used as planters. The same designs come in "brouzage" — resin bonded with bronze which gives a convincing verdigris finish.

The company's *pièce de résistance* is a 135cm Oak Leaf vase, moulded to the firm's own design and launched at this year's Chelsea Flower Show. A frieze of oak leaves and acorn tops a fish-scale pattern on the rest of the pot. It costs £980.

Those who want a more modest scale should visit a garden market, such as the one in Brick Lane, east London, where, on Sundays, some of the stalls stock real terracotta pots. S&B Evans & Sons in Ezra Street, near Brick Lane, has a wide stock at this time of year, from terracotta and glazed pots and troughs to wall-mounted and strawberry pots.

Should you really want to scare away the greenies, look out for a pot made by Potentials. The company paints ordinary flowerpots with a Michael Angelo, boundstooth cheek or a picture of great aunt Emily — any image can be applied. Prices range from £7.50 for a 2in pot to £300 for one 16in high.

But if you are looking for garden products made from lead, you may find a few problems. A lot of the fake lead garden ornaments available are not convincing: it is something to do with the effects of weathering. And remember, real lead is not only heavy but tempting to thieves. Capital Garden Products has a Swag window box (3ft 6in long by 8in wide by 8in high for £103) and an Adam window box (11in by 60in by 8in high for £143), which look real.

But if you have the money — and the muscle — M. Pauw in the King's Road, west London, specialises in real lead. Georgian-style planters, 10in high and weighing three stone, cost £125. Or there are 19in high tanks weighing 16 stone which cost £295.

CORRECTION

THE Howitt and Mowitt 3D Landscape V2 Deluxe CD-ROM (Weekend, December 7) costs £49.95, not £39.95 as stated.



S&B Evans & Sons in east London stocks terracotta and glazed pots, troughs and strawberry pots

POTTED HISTORY

- S&B Evans, 7a Ezra Street London E2 7RH (0171-729 6635 for opening times and catalogue).
- Spanish Pots, Casa La Ventana 67, Aguas de Busot, 03569 Alicante, Spain (00 34 656 90231).
- Capital Garden Products, Gibbs Reed Barn, Pashley Road, Tilehurst, East Sussex TN5 7HE (01580 201092 for a brochure).
- M. Pauw, 606 King's Road, London SW6 2DX (0171-731 4022 for opening times and brochure).
- The Old Bell Pottery, High Street, Lechlade (01367 252608 for opening times).
- Potentials, (0171-722 7237 for opening times).

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The supergrass you needn't worry about

Specialist grasses not only look good, they need very little maintenance and water, as Jane Owen discovers

Some names of grasses evoke pleasure — how about Quaking Grass or Doodling Dillies (*Briza media*) which grows to about 18in of slender green stalk with seed heads that tremble in the slightest breeze? Or how about some African Love Grass (*Eragrostis curvula*) — those thin green arches with grey seed heads — or the neat little nobs of Sea Urchin (*Festuca glauca* 'Seigiel'). Or then there's the old favourite, Foxtail barley or Squirreltail grass (*Hordeum jubatum*), whose sturdy bearded seed heads nod white-pink and green in flower arrangements.

Apart from pampas grass, whose white seed heads over cruel sharp-edged leaves can still be seen plunging above Victorian gardens, the use of specialist grass is relatively new to British gardens. Their growing vogue is due in part to the popularity of Roger Grounds's classic book *Ornamental Grasses* (published in 1979 by the Hardy Plant Society, ISBN 0 747 01219 9, but now out of print) and the specialist nursery which he and his wife, Diana Grenfell, started in Hampshire ten years ago. Mr Grounds's updated book on ornamental grasses will be published in spring 1998.

Grasses are all the more appealing because once established, most of them take little maintenance or water, a boon in our parched summers.

Today, a handful of British nurseries specialise in grasses, including Hoecroft Plants in Norfolk, Brian and Heather Hiley in Surrey and Birchdale Plants in Dorset (see right).

Mr Grounds's new book he is working on describes how grasses can be best used. His research has taken him to Germany and America, where grass gardening is well established. It is also popular in Japan, a fact reflected in the names of many of the grasses creeping into British gardens: Japanese blood grass, *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Yaku-shima Dwarf' or 'Nippon'.

In Japan, grasses are used alongside moss and stone to give a cool architectural effect. I have also seen simple yet dramatic massed plantings which give the impression of a running stream, but you are best advised to train as a Shinto priest

FACT FILE

■ Terry and Peta Bishop, Birchdale Plants, Bournemouth, Dorset (01202 521024).

■ Hoecroft Plants, Holt Road, Wood Norton, Dereham, Norfolk NR20 5BL (01362 684206).

■ Brian and Heather Hiley, 23 Little Woodcote Estate, Telegraph Track, Wallington, Surrey SM15 4AU (0181 647 9679). Send three 1st class stamps for catalogue.

■ Roger Grounds, Apple Court Nursery, Hordle, Lymington, Hants SO41 0HU (01590 642130).

for a few years before attempting anything like that. In Britain, we tend to go for complex plantings, weaving grasses into mixed borders. The tall, elegant arching grasses — like most *Miscanthus* — make punctuation marks, while the short, clump forming varieties, like many of the *Carex* (strictly speaking these are sedges rather than grasses) can make a good edging.

Scree gardens have come to mean almost any stone or shingle area which is planted with grasses and the stark, geometric shapes of phloxiums and cordylines.

The final effect is hot and Mediterranean, and has the added attraction of needing very little maintenance. It is hardly surprising that this garden style has become so popular in recent years that some local councils — such as Christchurch — have built them on traffic islands.



Squirreltail grass (*H. jubatum*)



Terry Bishop, who went into business selling grasses after he lost his job, now has a thriving mail-order company. He won a silver gilt medal at Chelsea this year

Two years ago Terry Bishop, then 50, lost his job as a head gardener. This summer he won his third silver gilt medal from the Royal Horticultural Society for his display of grasses, and a week later he was granted planning permission for two polytunnels on a third of an acre on which to grow his grasses and run Birchdale Plants, a mail-order company. It has not been easy — last winter Mr Bishop faced a spell on the dole.

He became interested in grasses while he was a head gardener. He went to shows and to other gardens but couldn't find the

range of grasses he wanted until he met the grass specialist Roger Grounds. At Mr Bishop's 30ft by 20ft garden in Dorset (now run by his wife Peta), he built up a modest collection of 20 grasses. As the roasting summer continued, his almost self-sufficient grasses thrived while his lawn, like many others, went unsightly brown.

When Mr Bishop was made redundant, his mother-in-law suggested he use some of her spare land outside Bournemouth — a horse paddock — to try to make a living. And so he began his company selling ornamental grasses and sedges.

To get his name on the map, Mr Bishop did eight shows nationwide in the first year — a gruelling business even for an established nursery. He reckoned, correctly, that he needed to put in the hard slog to win recognition.

The investment paid off and, at Chelsea this year, his display won a silver gilt medal — not bad for a beginner. Gradually his client list grew with the help of his simple catalogue which lists grasses according to their uses and where they thrive — grasses for wet, damp and boggy soil, grasses that give good ground cover and so on. In late autumn, Mr Bishop

recommends *Stipa arundinacea*. "It goes from green to yellow and red, and it looks beautiful when the sun shines through it," he says. In late summer, clouds of tiny brown flowers appear. It will grow in almost any soil, although it prefers slight shade.

The grass that he is most excited about is *Pennisetum* 'Burgundy Blaze' which has yet to find its way into the catalogues. It is a spectacular plant that grows to about 2ft high. It has an arching mass of dark bronze leaves and bronze and yellow seed heads so soft-looking that it is tempting to reach out and stroke them.

SCREE GARDEN

■ To make a scree garden, start by laying black polythene or any weed-suppressing membrane such as Plaster. Grasses are pretty tolerant but, if necessary, prepare the soil before the membrane goes down. ■ Add the scree or shingle to about 2in thick. Local materials look best so go to the garden centre, nursery or builders merchant. ■ Before piercing the membrane in order to plant, arrange the grasses in position you may want to change. ■ Once established, many grasses need little or no watering and only a quick cut with shears in spring.

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Just recently the Royal Mint released the gold sovereigns that were carried by service personnel during the Gulf War. Each serviceman was issued with twenty gold sovereigns by the Ministry of Defence as part of a survival kit to be used for safety, food and shelter should they be confronted by unfriendly forces. After the war just over 16,000 of the coins were returned to the M.O.D.

These are now being made available direct from the Royal Mint to collectors in a very attractive presentation pack where one Queen Elizabeth II Mint bullion gold sovereign is accompanied by replica dress medal miniatures of the two medals that were awarded to all those who served in the Gulf conflict.

For you to purchase one of these fabulous coins, the Royal Mint is charging £195.00 each. Now, if you aren't really interested in replica miniature

medals and you don't much care if your coin or coins have travelled to the Gulf and back, there is an alternative and much more affordable way of including one or two of these beautiful original sovereigns in your treasured collection. You can have an identical MINT gold decimal sovereign of Queen Elizabeth II for only £99.50 each, which represents a saving of more than £95.00 on each coin. There is also a special 'Christmas only' offer of 'two for the price of what the Royal Mint charges for one' where for only £195.00 you can have two gold sovereigns and they will each be different dates. I think this represents outstanding value!

The coins are in sparkling MINT condition, each coin is 22.05mm in diameter and they weigh 7.98grams of 22 carat gold. They were all exquisitely minted at the Royal Mint and what's more, as far as I know, none of these have ever come into contact with any sand!

Dates range from 1974 to 1982, although none were minted in 1975 or 1977. You may apply for up to a maximum of two coins. You should hurry as the quantity that is available for distribution at this price is strictly limited.

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It looks like a Georgian doll's house from the outside, but the inside of Ham Court dates back to late medieval times

Layers of history in the grand manor

The view from Ham Court is memorable. Look out from a top-floor bedroom window, with slightly banded knees — and the clipped lawn, topiary and box trees give way to a gravel drive, paddock and a broad view.

"It's stunning," says Penny Stones who, with husband Nic and three children, has lived at the five-bedroom Elizabethan house in Charlton Kings outside Cheltenham for 11 years. "On a sunny day you can see the whole escarpment from Cleeve Hill right round to Leckhampton."

At night the front looks like a doll's house when all the lights are on. You feel you could open it up and peer in.

Step inside the massive handsome frontage and walk the three floors and you begin to feel like a giant in a slightly shrunken house. But there is nothing twice about Ham. The beams are low and press down overhead. The facade is Georgian but the proportions are late medieval: an age when door frames came small and where men fought with muskets in honour of the king. The scent of history seems to hang from the woodwork.

In fact, Ham Court's impressive past adds to its intrigue. The Stones were living in Cheltenham when they bought Ham Court in 1985. Mrs Stones's family are from the Regency spa town and Mr Stones passed the property each day. "We saw an advertisement in the Gloucestershire Echo," says Mr Stones, a solicitor in Cheltenham.

"The children were small and we needed something bigger. It had a swimming pool, a tennis court and a 450-year-old barn — all the things we didn't expect so close to Cheltenham."

HOUSE OF THE WEEK

Ham Court, Charlton Kings, Gloucestershire
● Price: £750,000
● Setting: Cheltenham is two miles away; Heathrow one hour; by car
● Shopping: House of Fraser at Cavendish House in Cheltenham; fashion from the Montpellier district; jewellery at Martin & Company — makers of the Cheltenham Gold Cup
● Entertainment: Cheltenham Literary Festival in October, Annual Festival of Contemporary Music in July, racing from October through to April.

ham. It was ideal. It was ten minutes from the office so we bought it in 72 hours."

The family's mark on Ham Court relates to the age of Elizabeth II. Their conversion of an Elizabethan post-and-beam cattle shed won local awards and would make a wonderful office or studio.

"Every century has added to the house — from Regency mahogany banisters to the Victorian greenhouse at the back," Mr Stones says.

The Cheltenham family kept a home there after 1827 and elevated Ham in status to a sub-manor. The estate was granted to Robert Goodrich in 1564, and in 1574 Thomas Packer paid £400 for the property. It was described as the "Farme of Hamme" in 1576.



Penny Stones in the beamed guest bedroom where Prince Rupert stayed during the Civil War

It is believed the main timber-framed building — which survives today as the body of Ham Court — was built by one of the Packer sons, Arthur or Alexander, at the turn of the 16th century. Forty years later Ham Court provided fodder for Royalist troops during the Civil War.

"Prince Rupert, a Cavalier, slept a night here before doing battle

against the Roundheads under Oliver Cromwell at the Battle of Tewkesbury," Mr Stones says, referring to the beamed guest room.

"There was a lot of Civil War fighting here but I don't think the stay did Prince Rupert much good."

An inventory dated July 6, 1685, following Alexander Packer's death, shows the life of 17th-century

Ham Court. Mr Packer owned a sword and guns with their belts and held £25 in his purse — an impressive amount for the day.

Bacon hung in the kitchen chimney, parlour tables were draped in carpet while the parlour chamber had calico hangings, a tick tester bed, twiggen chair, six fashionable red cushions, a looking-glass and red valance.



Ham Court in Charlton Kings, near Cheltenham, on sale at £750,000

Ham Court was a staging post on the road to London. The house faced the coach road and was (and is) beautifully timbered. After 1734, however, and its purchase by the trustees of Sir William Dodwell, a facade of Flemish brick was added to the building's far side. The back of Ham Court became its front, opening up a vista to Leckhampton Hill and the Cotswolds, which remains to this day.

A Grade II house, it has seven acres of ground and is on the village edge at Charlton Kings. "There are people around which is good for security and yet it is totally rural. It is very civilised and it will remain that way," Mr Stones says. The land leading up to the house is designated an area of outstanding natural beauty.

Now their children are grown up, the Stones are selling for £750,000 and are looking for something smaller in Cheltenham. "Penny is ranting around here on her own and I now travel a lot to Los Angeles and New York," says Mr Stones, who is also a director of Wolverhampton Wanderers football club and travels to all the home games.

"The house's past has been a privilege, not a responsibility," Mrs Stones says. "We feel the layers and layers of families that have lived here. We've had our tenure and left our mark but we feel we were very much caretakers rather than its owners."

"We would love another family to take over and enjoy it as a marvellous family home."

ALEX WIJERATNE
 ● Agent: Knight Frank, Cirencester, Gloucestershire (01285 639771).

PROPERTY NEWS

■ NEW homes are out-performing old, says Hamptons, with the price of new terraced houses rising by 13.6 per cent and new flats by 17.7 per cent between the second quarters of 1995 and 1996. Old terraced houses rose by 1.5 per cent; old flats by 4.8 per cent.

■ THE number of British people buying country houses, compared with overseas purchasers, has increased by more than 40 per cent since 1992, Knight Frank says. This year, 78 per cent of purchases of houses over £250,000 were by British buyers, with an increasing number of foreign buyers coming from eastern Europe.

■ RESIDENTS in the Clareville Grove area, London SW4, are relieved that the Palestinian Liberation Organisation HQ has been sold (for close to the £950,000 asking price). "When the PLO were there it was virtually impossible to sell anything in the area," says Ed Mead, of Douglas & Gordon.

■ ONLY 12 per cent of people looking for country properties have sold their houses, Cluttons says. It found that 30 per cent of people looking had not put their own houses on the market, and 12 per cent of would-be country house buyers were in rented accommodation as a stop-gap.

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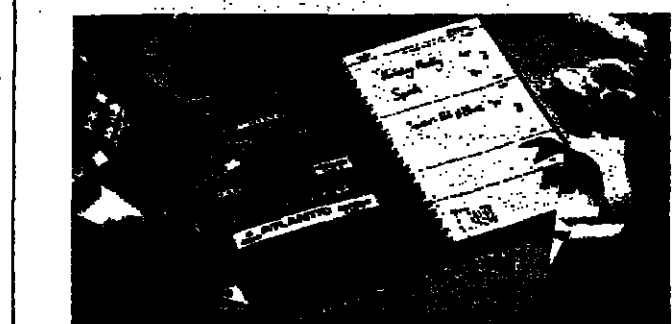
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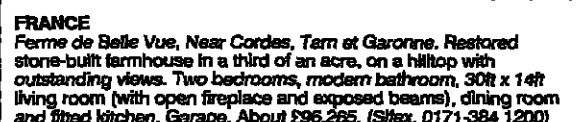
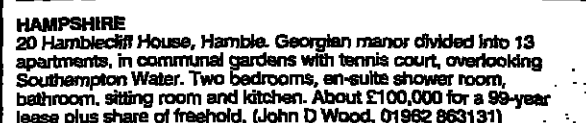
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Stephen and Janette Hinton-Lever, with their family, outside their brand new thatched home in Buckinghamshire

The equipment will cost about £250, plus a £180 installation fee. Monitoring will cost £15 a month.

"Ninety per cent of thatch fires are caused by heat transfer through the chimney's brickwork, which on most listed thatched buildings is single brick," Mrs Sanders says. "Sparks from the chimney are not a common cause of fires. When the heat trans-

The Hinton-Levers' new home has a lined chimney but all there is between the roof timbers and the reed thatching is roofing felt. However, samples of the reed, brick and tiles used in the building were sent to planners by the builders, Orchard Gate Developments. "As is normal, we wanted approval of the materials

Christopher White, a director of Cotswold and Chiltern Master Thatchers and chairman of the National Society of Master Thatchers, which represents about 100 thatching companies, says it took a team of six about six weeks to thatch the property. He reckons that the weed, which is laid to a depth of 12 in.

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Choristers at King's College, Cambridge, rehearse for the Christmas Eve service, Thomas Harries, left, Billy Hanrahan, Nicholas Spiers and Edward Warwick, all 12, and Edward Saklatvala, 13, one of whom will be chosen to sing solo

O come, all ye carol singers

Wigeor
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ENGLAND

Birmingham Cathedral (0121-236 4333): Dec 16: 12.30pm, Post Office Carol Service; 7.15pm, West Midlands Police Carol Service; Dec 18: 11.45am, Railway Mission Carol Service; 7.30pm, City Technology College Carol Service; Dec 20: 10.15am, Selly Oak School Carol Service; Dec 21: 10.30am & 11.15am, "Birthday in Bethlehem" — a children's puppet nativity presentation; 12.30pm, Carols For All; Dec 23: 12.30pm, Music and readings for Christmas; Dec 24: 5.30pm, festival of nine lessons & carols.

Bristol Cathedral (0117-9264 879): Dec 17 & 18: 7.30pm, Carols and Christmas music with Bristol Cathedral School Choir; Dec 24: 3.30pm, service of nine lessons and carols.

Canterbury Cathedral (01227 762 862): Dec 24: 3pm, nine lessons and carols.

Carlisle Cathedral (01228 48151): tomorrow: 3.30pm, Carol Service; Dec 16: 7.30pm, Trinity School Carol Service; Dec 18: 7.30pm, King's Own Royal Border Regiment Carol Service; Dec 22: 3.30pm, festival of nine lessons & carols; Dec 24: 3pm, Crib Service; 6.30pm, Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols.

Chelmsford Cathedral (01245 263660): Dec 17: 7.30pm, Rainsford School Carol Service; Dec 19: 2pm, Chelmsford Cathedral School Carol Service; Dec 20: 2pm, County High School Carol Service; Dec 21: 7.30pm, Chelmsford Singers concert; Dec 24: 4pm, crib service; 6pm, festival of nine lessons & carols by candlelight.

Chester Cathedral (01244 324756): today: 6.30pm, Christingle Service; Dec 18: 10.45am, Queen's School Carol Service; Dec 19: 10.45am, King's School Carol Service; Dec 20: 3pm, County Council Carol Service; Dec 22: 6.30pm, Nave Choir Carol Service; Dec 24: 3.30pm, Cathedral Carol Service; 5.15pm, children's crib service.

Chichester Cathedral (01243 782595): Dec 22 & 23: 6pm, Cathedral Carol Service; Dec 24: 4.15pm, Children's service with blessing of crib; 10.45pm, vigil of music and readings.

Covey Cathedral (01203 227597): today: 7.30pm, A Ceremony of Carols by Britten (tickets); Dec 21: 3pm, family carols; Dec 24: 3.30pm, The Journey into Bethlehem; 7pm, Carol Service, The Form of A Servant.

Durham Cathedral (0191-386 4266): today: 2.30pm, Menap Carol Service; Dec 17: 7pm, HM Prison Staff Carol Service; Dec 22: 4pm, Blessing of the crib and lighting of the Christmas tree; 7pm, festival of nine lessons and carols; Dec 24: 3pm, festival of nine lessons and carols.

Ely Cathedral (01353 667735): Dec 23: 5.30pm, Britten's A Ceremony of Carols; Dec 24: 6.30pm, procession with carols and blessing of the crib.

Guildford Cathedral (01483 565287): Dec 21: 7.30pm, Cathedral Choir Christmas concert (tickets); Dec 24: 4pm, Children's Christmas service.

Hereford Cathedral (01432 359 880): Dec 21: 12 noon, Carols for shoppers; Dec 23: 7pm, festival of nine lessons and carols.

Leicester Cathedral (01533 625294): tomorrow: 2.45pm, Bach Choir

Concert; Dec 16: 7.30pm, Loros Carol concert; Dec 17: 7.30pm, Old Leicestersians Carol Service; Dec 18: 7.30pm, Judgemeadow Community College Concert; Dec 19: 7.30pm, Leicestershire Art Students concert; Dec 21: 5pm, Christingle service; Dec 22: 4pm, Carol Service; Dec 24: 4pm, candlelit festival of nine lessons and carols.

Lichfield Cathedral (01543 250300): Dec 17: 7.30pm, King Edward VI School Carol Service; Dec 18: 7.30pm, Lichfield Cathedral School Carol Service; Dec 19: 8pm, Lichfield Cathedral Special Choir with Cannon Salvation Army Band Carol concert; Dec 21: 7.30pm, Christmas festival of handbells; Dec 24: 6.30pm, family crib service with Cathedral Choristers; Dec 26: 3.30pm, The Cathedral Carol Service.

Lincoln Cathedral (01522 544544): tomorrow: 7.30pm, BBC Radio Lincolnshire/LSG Carol Service; Dec 22: 2pm, Carol Service; Dec 24: 4pm, Carol Service.

Liverpool Cathedral (0151-709 6271): tomorrow: 3pm, Blessing of the crib and lighting of the Christmas tree; Dec 21: 3pm, annual Christmas recital; Dec 22: 3pm, holly bough carols; Dec 24: 3pm, carols for Christmas Eve.

Manchester Cathedral (0161-833 2220): Dec 14: 7.30pm, family carols (tickets); Dec 17: Chetham's lunchtime concert; Dec 18: 7.30pm, Trinity High School Carol concert; Dec 19: 7.30pm, Chetham's School of Music Carol concert; Dec 21: 7.30pm, carols for all with Cantata Choir (tickets); Dec 22: 7.30pm, Messiah with Cantata Choir (tickets); Dec 23: 7.30pm, Nine lessons and carols; Dec 24: 12 noon, family carols around the tree.

Newcastle Cathedral (0191-232 1939): Dec 17: 5.30pm, Shops & Offices Carols; Dec 18: 6pm, Wilkinson Maughan Carol Service; Dec 20: 10am, Dame Allan's School Carol Service; Dec 24: 6pm, Cathedral Carol Service; 11.30pm, blessing of the crib.

Oxford, Christ Church Cathedral (01865 276155): Dec 23: 7.30pm, service of nine lessons & carols; Dec 24: 3pm, service of nine lessons & carols (tickets — no charge).

Peterborough Cathedral (01733 62780): Dec 24: 4pm, festival of nine lessons & carols & blessing of the Crib; 8pm, carols with the Salvation Army Citadel Band.

Portsmouth Cathedral (01705 823300): Dec 22: 6.30pm, Cathedral Carol Service; Dec 24: 4pm, children's crib service.

Ripon Cathedral (01765 602072): Dec 15: 5.30pm, Evensong followed by Britten's Ceremony of Carols; Dec 17: 7.30pm, Grammar School Carol Service; Dec 18: noon, Cathedral Choir School Carol Service; Dec 22: 5.30pm, nine lessons & carols; Dec 24: 11am, the blessing of the crib; 5.30pm, nine Lessons & carols; Dec 26: 9.45am, Fountains Abbey pilgrimage (leaves Cathedral at 10.30am).

Rochester Cathedral (01634 844023): Dec 20 & 21: 7.30pm, Carol Service; Dec 23: noon, lunchtime Carol Service; Dec 24: 3.15pm, blessing of crib.

St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Suffolk (01284 754852): Dec 21: 7pm, carols by candlelight in aid of the Children's Society; Dec 24: 4pm, children's crib service; 7pm, service of nine lessons and carols.

Salisbury Cathedral (01722 330914): today: 7.30pm, Musical Society concert, Monteverdi Ves-

From Bach to Britten and handbell ringing to Salvation Army bands, a selection of Christmas services across the country

pers (1610); Dec 21: 5.30pm, Christmas nativity play & blessing of the crib; Dec 23: 7pm, Cathedral Carol Service.

Sheffield Cathedral (0114-275 3434): today: 7.30pm, Grand Brass Band and Sheffield Cathedral Choir concert; Dec 16: 7.30pm, South Yorkshire Federation of Women's Institute Carol Service; Dec 18: 12.30pm, Department of Education and Employment Carol Service; 6.30pm, civic carols with the Cathedral Choir and brass; Dec 19: 7.30pm, Sheffield Oratorio Chorus carols; Dec 21: 7pm, Bolsterstone Male Voice choir concert; Dec 22: 10.30am, sung Eucharist (1662) & preparation of the crib; 4pm, Radio Sheffield carols; Dec 23: 12.30pm, carols galore; 6.30pm, Cole Brothers carols; Dec 24: 7pm, festival of nine lessons & carols.

Southwark Cathedral, London SE1 (0171-407 3708): today: 7pm, Evelina Children's Hospital Carol concert (tickets); Dec 17: 12.45pm, "Come and sing carols"; Dec 22: 3pm, Cathedral Carol Service.

Truro Cathedral (01872 76782): Dec 24: 7pm, festival of nine lessons and carols; Dec 29: 3pm, children's Carol Service with pets.

Wakefield Cathedral (01924 373923): Dec 22: 4pm, nine lessons & carols; Dec 24: 5pm, family crib service with Girl's Choir.

Wells Cathedral (01749 674483): Dec 24: 3.30pm, blessing of the crib; Dec 26: 3pm, Wells Cathedral Choir Carol Service in the nave.

Westminster Abbey (0171-976 0983): Dec 22: 6pm, service of lessons and carols (St Margaret's); Dec 24: 4pm, festival of seven lessons and carols.

Winchester Cathedral (01962 853137): Dec 21 & 22: 6.30pm, festival of nine lessons and carols; Dec 24: 3pm, children's service (nave).

Worcester Cathedral (01905 28854): Dec 22: 4pm, festival of nine lessons and carols; Dec 23: 7.30pm, festival of nine lessons and carols.

York Minster (01904 624426): Dec 19, 20 & 21: 8pm, carols by candlelight (tickets); Dec 24: 4pm, festival of nine lessons and carols.

St George's Cathedral, Southwark (0171-928 5256): tomorrow: 4pm, parish Carol Service.

St Paul's Cathedral, London (0171-

246 8348): Dec 20: 6.30pm, A concert of Christmas Music, St Paul's Cathedral Choir & City of London Sinfonia; Dec 22: 6.30pm, organ recital: *La Nativité du Seigneur*; Dec 23: 1.15pm, Britten's Ceremony of Carols (Cathedral entry charges apply); Dec 24: 4pm, Christmas Carol Service & blessing of the crib; Dec 26 and 27: 5pm, Christmas music at the crib.

SCOTLAND

Aberdeen, St Andrew's Cathedral (01224 640290): Dec 22: 6.30pm, festival of nine lessons and carols with cathedral choir.

Edinburgh, St Giles's Cathedral (0131-225 4363): Dec 22: 6pm, nine lessons and carols.

Glasgow, St Mary's Cathedral (0141-359 4956): Dec 22: 4.30pm, candlelit nine lessons and carols.

Inverness, St Andrew's Cathedral (01463-233 539): Dec 20: 2pm, Bishop Eden's Primary School Carol Service; Dec 22: 6.30pm, festival of nine lessons and carols (cathedral choir and local schools orchestra).

Oban, St John's Cathedral (01631 562323): Dec 22: 6.30pm, festival of nine lessons and carols.

N. IRELAND

Armagh, St Patrick's Cathedral (01861 523142): Dec 22: 3.15pm, festival of nine lessons and carols.

Belfast Cathedral (01232 328332): Dec 22: 3.30pm, service of nine lessons and carols; Dec 24: 8pm, festival of nine lessons and carols.

Enniskillen, St Macartin's Cathedral (01365 322917): (Cathedral closed due to fire — services will be held in cathedral hall); Dec 22: 7pm, festival of nine lessons and carols.

Lisburn Cathedral (01846 662865): Dec 22: 6.30pm, Carol Service.

Londonderry, St Columba's Cathedral (01504 262746): Dec 22: 6pm, festival of nine lessons and carols.

WALES

Bangor Cathedral (01248 370693): Dec 19: 7pm, festival of nine lessons and carols held by candlelight; Dec 22: 3.15pm, choral evensong and

the blessing of the crib; 6pm, Welsh carols.

Clwyd, St Asaph (01745 582245): Dec 24: 7pm, festival of nine lessons and carols.

Dyfed, St David's (01437 720202): Dec 22: 6pm, nine lessons and carols by candlelight.

Llandaff Cathedral (01222 564554): Dec 24: 3.30pm, service of nine lessons and carols; 9.30pm, crib blessing with the cathedral choral society.

Newport Cathedral (St Woolos), Gwent (01633 266708): Dec 24: 3pm, festival of nine lessons and carols.

LONDON CHURCHES

All Saints, Margaret St, W1 (0171-636 1788): Dec 19: 12.30pm, lunchtime Carol Service followed by mulled wine and mince pies; Jan 5: 6pm, service of lessons and carols for Epiphany.

All Souls, Langham Place, W1 (0171-580 3522): tomorrow: 6.30pm, carols by candlelight; Dec 22: 6.30pm, carols by candlelight.

Our Lady of the Assumption, Warwick St, SW19 (0181-946 7692): Dec 24: 11.30pm, Carol Service.

Chelsea Old Church, SW3 (0171-352 5627): Dec 22: 6pm, service of nine lessons and carols sung by church quartet with handbells.

Crown Court Church of Scotland, Covent Garden, WC2 (0171-836 5643): Dec 20: 7.30pm, choir Carol concert; Dec 22: 6.30pm, service of nine lessons and carols.

Holy Trinity Brompton, Brompton Road, SW7 (0171-581 8255): tomorrow: 5pm and 7.30pm: carols by candlelight; Dec 16: 7.30pm, carols by candlelight; Dec 22: 11am, Christingle service.

St Anne and St Agnes (Lutheran), Gresham St, EC2 (0171-606 4986): Dec 15: 7pm, Bach Vespers (Cantata No 36); Dec 24: 7pm, Candlelight Carol Service.

St Bartholomew the Great, Smithfield, EC1 (0171-606 5171): Dec 22: 6.30pm, festival of nine lessons and carols.

St Bride's, Fleet Street, EC4 (0171-353 1301): tomorrow: 6.30pm, ceremony of carols; Dec 17: 6pm, Carol singing for printers; Dec 18: 12 noon, Fleet Street carols; Dec 22:

6.30pm, the festival of nine lessons and carols.

St Clement Danes, Strand WC2 (0171-242 8282): Dec 22: 11am, service of nine lessons and carols in aid of St Christopher's Fellowship.

St Columba's Church of Scotland, Pont Street, SW1 (0171-584 2321): tomorrow: 11am, a vision of Christmas (family service); Dec 22: 5pm, Carol Service; Dec 24: 11.30pm, candlelight midnight service.

St Etheldreda's, Ely Place, EC1 (0171-405 1061): Dec 23: 6.30pm, carols old & new sung by Choir of St Etheldreda's.

St George's, Hanover Square, W1 (0171-623 0874): Dec 22: 6pm, Carol Service with church choir.

St James's, Garlickhythe, EC4 (0171-248 7546): Dec 22: 7pm, Advent Carol Service with church choir.

St James's, Sussex Gardens, W2 (0171-262 9976): Dec 22: 6pm, candlelit service of lessons and carols (mulled wine and mince pies afterwards); Dec 24: 5.30pm, carols around the crib.

St John's, Stratford, E15 (0181-503 1913): Dec 17: 1.10pm, lunchtime carols; Dec 22: 6.30pm, Christmas Carol Service.

St Luke's, Chelsea, SW3 (0171-351 7365): Dec 22: 6.30pm, candlelit Carol Service with choir and Christmas tree.

St Mark's, Regent's Park Rd, NW1 (0171-586 1694): Dec 22: 3.30pm, Christmas carols and lessons.

St Margaret's, Westminster, SW1 (0171-976 0983): Dec 16: Westminster City School Carol Service; Dec 17: 1pm, Department of Employment Carol Service; Dec 22: 6pm, service of lessons and carols.

St Martin-in-the-Fields, WC2 (0171-930 0089): tonight: 7.30pm, Yuletide celebration by candlelight (tickets); Dec 16: 7.30pm, Christmas Baroque by candlelight (tickets); Dec 18: 6.30pm, festival of nine lessons and carols; Dec 19 and 20: 7.30pm, Handel's Messiah by candlelight (tickets); Dec 21: 7.30pm, Christmas by candlelight (tickets); Dec 23: 7.30pm, the spirit of Christmas by candlelight (tickets); Dec 24: 6.30pm, the full parish Carol Service and the blessing of the crib.

St Mary Abbots Church, Kensington, W8 (0171-937 5136): Dec 20: 1pm, a Carol Service for the community; Dec 22: 6.30pm, Carol Service and blessing of the crib; Dec 24: 3pm, special crib service for the children.

St Mary-the-Virgin, Primrose Hill, NW3 (0171-722 3238): Dec 22: 6pm, candlelit Carol Service with church choir.

St Marylebone, Marylebone Road, W1 (0171-935 7315): Dec 22: 6.30pm, festival of nine lessons and carols by candlelight.

St Paul's, Wilton Place, SW1 (0171-235 3460): Dec 19: 7.30pm, Carol Service by candlelight.

St Peter's, Eaton Square, SW1 (0171-235 4482): Dec 22: 6.30pm, Christmas Carol Service; Dec 24: 5pm, children's crib service and carols.

Wesley's Chapel, City Road, EC2 (0171-253 2264): Dec 19: 12.45pm, Carol Service with Salvation Army Band in aid of the Marie Curie Foundation.

Westminster Central Hall (Methodist), SW1 (0171-222 8010): tomorrow: 2.30pm and 6.30pm, Christmas Carol concert sung by London Emanuel Choir (for tickets call 01753 350637).

CHAPELS ROYAL

Chapel Royal of St Peter ad Vincula, HM Tower of London (0171-709 0765): Dec 22: 11am, nine lessons and carols.

Chapel Royal, St James's Palace (0171-930 3007): Dec 18: 11.15am, Carol Service.

Chapel Royal, Hampton Court Palace (0181-971 2762): Dec 22: 3.30pm, festival of nine lessons and carols (admission by chapel pass until 3pm).

Grosvenor Chapel, South Audley Street, W1 (0171-499 1684): Dec 24: 11pm, Carol Service.

Queen's Chapel of the Savoy, WC2 (0171-836 7221): Dec 22: 11am, chapel Carol Service.

Guards Chapel, Wellington Barracks, SW1 (0171-414 3228): Dec 15: 11am & 6pm, parish Carol Service; Dec 24: 11.15pm, carols at the manger.

CATHOLIC

ENGLAND

Birmingham, St Chad's Cathedral (0121-236 1225): Dec 20: 7.30pm, Carol Service, followed by punch and mince pies.

Liverpool, Christ the King Cathedral (0151-709 3991): Dec 22: 5pm, festival Advent service and candlelight procession.

Plymouth Cathedral (01752-462 537): Dec 29: 3pm, Cathedral Christmas Carol Service.

Westminster Cathedral (0171-798 9055): tomorrow: 3.30pm, Carol Service; Dec 19: 7.30pm, a Christmas celebration with Cathedral Choir and Southern Sinfonietta in aid of Cathedral Charities (tickets).

N. IRELAND

Armagh, St Patrick's Cathedral (01861 522802): Dec 22: 7pm, Carol Service.

Belfast, St Peter's Cathedral (01232 327573): Dec 22: 3pm, Carol Service with cathedral choir.

Derry, St Eugene's Cathedral (01504 262894): Dec 22: 7pm, carols.

Newry, St Patrick and Colman Cathedral (01693 62586): Dec 19: 8pm, Cathedral Carol Service with St Mary's High School.

SCOTLAND

Aberdeen, St Mary's Cathedral (01224 640160): Dec 24: 11.30pm, Carol Service.

Good Shepherd Cathedral, Ayr (01292 265716): Dec 24: 11.30pm, Carol Service.

Dundee, St Andrew's Cathedral (01382 225228): Dec 22: 2.30pm, Carol Service led by Cecilia Choir.

Edinburgh, St Mary's Cathedral (0151-556 1798): Dec 20: 7.30pm, Advent service; Dec 22: 11.30pm, a sequence of meditations and carols followed by midnight mass.

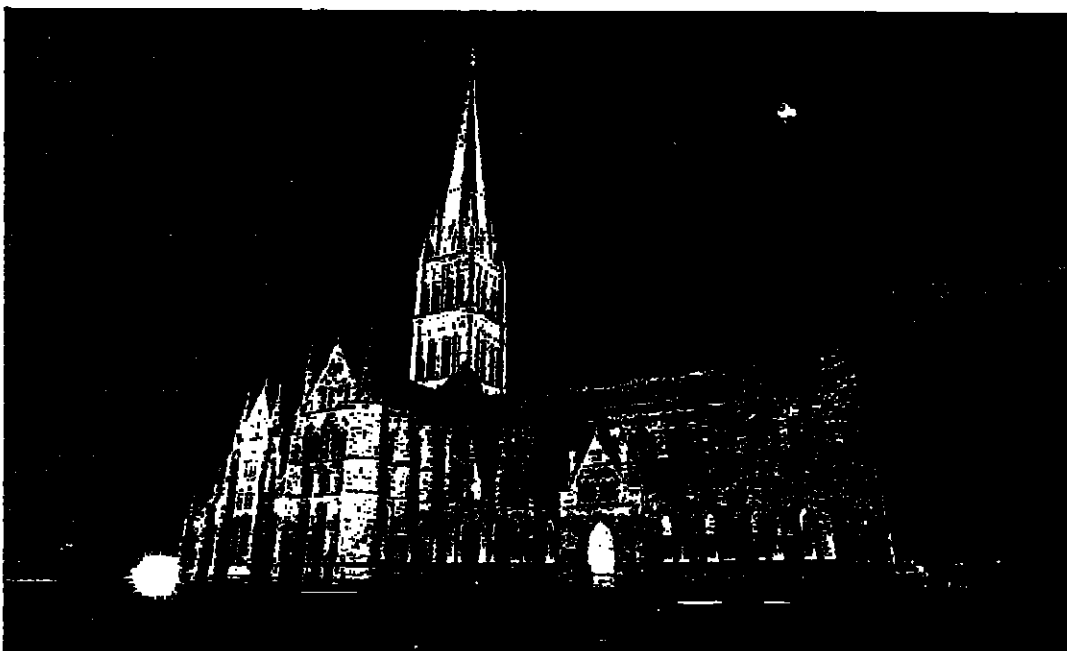
Glasgow, St Andrew's Cathedral (0141-221 3096): Dec 24: 11.30pm, candlelit Carol Service.

Motherwell Cathedral: Dec 17: 7.30pm, a feast of Christmas music.

Oban, St Columba's Cathedral (01631 562123): Dec 22: 5pm, crib blessing; 11.30pm, Carol Service.

Paisley, St Mirin's Cathedral (0141-899 3601): Dec 24: 11.30pm, Carol Service.

Research by Tessa Edbrooke and Orna Dolan.



Salisbury Cathedral, Wiltshire, is staging Monteverdi vespers, a nativity service and crib blessing

Plans to clean up the countryside fail to understand what goes on behind all that mess — there may be a lack of gloss, but there is no lack of life

I remember the day war broke out as if it was only yesterday, which is not surprising since hostilities only began on Monday. The call to arms was uplifting, and I read with a Churchillian growl, would have every red-blooded country dweller reaching for a tin hat.

I quote: "It must be fought wherever it appears — not just in the open countryside but in village high streets and in the vulnerable zones: around the urban margins and along the transport corridors."

Wow! What manner of threat can this be? Supermarket expansion, housing development, wind farms, bypasses, plagues of locusts, massacre of the first born? None of those. The words were published by the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE), to launch its campaign against rural "clutter".

Oh, that's all right then, I thought, breathing a sigh of relief, nothing to do with me. It must be all about the crassness of 20th-century phone boxes plunked outside medieval churches, hamburger shops on the fringes of ancient woodland, that sort of thing. Difficult not to support a campaign

One man's clutter is another's treasure

against deliberate scarring of the landscape. The photographs that accompanied the campaign booklet, *The Cluttered Countryside*, showed telecommunication towers atop the South Downs and power lines scything across hill and dale. It all served to prepare the soul to receive the words of Clough Williams-Ellis, an architect and early campaigner writing in 1928, who said: "A state of being that some of us find intolerable can only be changed by enlisting, through pain, a great body of active sympathisers who have come to see that to go as you please is not always to arrive at what is pleasant."

The trouble with all this, and what will be eventually a source of more pain than even Williams-Ellis expected, will be deciding exactly what is clutter. The CPRE shows caravan parks, signposts and snack bars in lay-bys as prime culprits. The worry is where they will be pointing the finger next. I would certainly

not escape their scrutiny. I have a modest mountain of hay which is being protected from the weather by a ratty grey sheet held down by a few sets of twisted harrows. It is not a pretty sight. But it is an honest pile of hay and those rusty old harrows gave good service, once. I am sure that Liberty do a nice, uncluttering tarpaulin with a rural pattern but it would be beyond my pocket. My muck-heap would not bear close scrutiny either. Rather than being a shrine to the miraculous process of composting, it is, to be honest, a pile of ... organic clutter. I suppose the CPRE would rather I built one modelled on Swiss muck-heaps, which are as neat, tidy and rectangular as their blocks of chocolate. They might want the entire countryside



PAUL HEINEY

modelled on Switzerland, which is so epic and span that you feel compelled to remove your shoes when crossing the border.

Do not think that I am in any way against this campaign, it's just that I have a deep unease based on the fact that, in my experience, the most interesting things in the countryside happen in the most cluttered places.

Take villages. I could show you one not five miles from here which is alive, thriving, busy, has its own shop, school, pub, garage, and yet is about as tidy as the deck of the average seven-year-old schoolboy. There are blots all over this village caused by overhead power lines, fast roads and cheaply built postwar council housing. The most common sight is of jacked-up Ford Escorts being stripped down and rebuilt

in front gardens, or old men staggering to a ramshackle shed to retrieve a spade with which to attack the garden. There is no lack of life, just a lack of gloss.

A few miles the other way is the perfect English village. Cottages called Rose, Bramble and Hawthorn huddle around a pond where the ducks subdue their quacking for fear of disturbing the peace. It has prettiness and unclutteredness like Shirley Temple had cuteness. It is as dead as a dodo, but it is tidy.

Or take the case of Mark Popplewell of Snelland in Lincolnshire, who had an enforcement order served on him by his local council because neighbours said he had turned a pasture into a scrapyard. The order was lifted when his tractor collection was eventually recognised as "nationally renowned". One man's clutter is another's national treasure, but who's to say which is which?

"Riding establishments," says the report, "are common offenders with scruffy buildings ... tyre dumps and luridly-painted oil drums and poles." I am hanging my head in shame again. Sorry everybody, we have lurid poles. It is just that if you paint them the same colour as Barbour jackets the pony can't see them and might bang its knees, thus bringing the animal welfare enthusiasts down on my back as well. As for tyres, I suppose they are somehow less cluttering when attached to tourists' cars.

Clutter is less important than what goes on behind it. By all means let us rid trunk roads of corporate advertising hoardings, nor do we need any more signs telling us how far to a Little Chef. But the best bacon sandwich I ever ate was bought from a cluttered old truck in a lay-by, and the best horsewoman I know operates from a stable held together with nails, string and bits of tin. Why should we be robbed of such skills because these people have less of an understanding of the decorative arts than some might wish?

● Readers can write to: *The Times Countryside Campaign*, c/o Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN.

Wigeon come in from the cold

FEATHER REPORT

MORE AND more wigeon are coming into Britain as we get nearer to Christmas. Their numbers will peak in the new year, with about a quarter of a million of these handsome ducks on our estuaries and in flooded meadows inland.

They go around in flocks, and are usually seen at the edge of the water, because, like geese, they eat a lot of grass. They are quite sturdy walkers on their webbed feet.

On the water, they are easily recognised from a long way off. The drakes have chestnut heads, with a curious butterfly shield above the beak. Their back is a soft grey, with a cobweb of fine lines, and they have distinctive white patches on the flank and in front of the tail. The females are a ruddy brown, but they have the same round heads and small beaks as the drakes.

I watched a flock of about 70 at the edge of some floodwater earlier this week. They were in and out of the water all the time, nibbling away at the grass for a while, then floating about idly, or picking up odd blades of grass from the surface. At one point the whole flock leapt into the air and shot away into the sky, revealing the white patch at the front of their wings, a feature found in no other British duck. A few small reed also went up with them. They circled round, flying very fast, not stretching their necks out so far as most ducks, then all of them streamed down again. They were soon feeding on the muddy grass or drifting afloat as calmly as before. They used to feed mainly on eel-grass in

the estuaries. As with Brent geese, a taste for grass in the pastures and for the young shoots of winter wheat is a recent development, though now quite regular.

The biggest flocks are found every winter on Lindisfarne in Northumberland, and further south on the Ouse Washes. Most of them go back to northern Europe or Russia in the spring, but a few pairs stay to nest in the heather by the Scottish lochs.

Visitors to Iceland complain of the countless midges that swarm in summer, but the wigeon like them. They feed their young on them, and eat some of them themselves.

ANOTHER unmistakable characteristic of the wigeon is its whistling call-note. The birds I watched used it constantly. It can be represented quite accurately as "whee-ou" — the first syllable sharply uttered, the second more melodic and resonant. For me it is one of the most haunting winter sounds. On many a cold day I have heard it ringing out from a mist-covered lake where nothing was visible, and thought to myself with pleasure, "Ah! wigeon there".

DERWENT MAY

● What's about Birds — look out for snow (a white, black and grey duck) on gravel pits and reservoirs. Twitches — paddyfield warbler, Marazion, Cornwall; American wigeon, Conwy, North Wales; Kenish plover, Fleetwood, Lancashire. Details from Birdline, 0891 700222, 40p a min cheap rate, 50p at other times.



Wigeon like to come ashore to feed on pasture grass



The red deer is a forest animal. The wellbeing of the species will be achieved only by reducing numbers to a population that can be sustained inside the new woodlands

Why it's good to stalk

Jim Crumley argues that it is time to do away with barren sporting estates and restore the wooded wildernesses where deer can thrive

THE long, contouring diversion to come up hill and downwind has taken half an hour. The last 200 yards are marked by the furrow I have crawled through deep snow. The long black barrel is cold in my ungloved left hand. The

sight is settled comfortably at my right eye. A fierce intensity of concentration before I shoot, seeking out the perfect stillness. An audience of deep-white mountainside crowds round to watch. The denouement is at hand.

In the parlance of the Highland deer forest, he is a "royal", a 12-point red deer stag. Monarch of this particular glen he may be, but there is little majesty about him now, with the rutting season over and winter entrenched.

Exceptionally heavy falls of snow lie thickly even on the lowest slopes, knee-deep in the gullies to a stag which likes to run, stiff-legged and high-headed. Now he moves slowly, head-down, placing each foot with tentative restraint. His passion is spent, his strength sapped and, just when he could have done with an Indian summer and a late bit of hill grass, moss and lichens, the heavy snows have come early and buried all that.

A few weeks ago, he was royal. He roared across the flame-shaded autumn grasses, roaring his rutting season anthem, strutting his stuff with 18 hinds, rustling the hinds of lesser stags to swell his harem, fending off all challenges. His voice and the wide set of his lowered antlers were deterrent enough. I saw him drive out two of the older hinds. Only the best for him. But the rut takes its toll. Now he has slouched back to the bachelor herd. He is weaker now than he has ever been, weaker too than he should ever be. He is enfeebled by the deer forest.

"Deer forest" — it is not a fortunate expression. It defines vast acreages of Highland landscapes made barren by design, shorn of all trees by sheep and by felling, then stuffed with deer to run natural regeneration in the bud to

create "the sporting estate", that expression loathed by many people in conservation and crofting as a euphemism for the most useless and hopeless of all the Highlands' land management options. People and natural predators were cleared with more or less equal vehemence. The Highland Clearances coincided with a crusade by the new breed of Victorian landowners against raptors and carnivores; both flowed unchecked through much of the 19th century and made deserts of Highland Scotland. Both people and natural predators are still inconvenient to the

'Nature would never have presided over the decline of the demeaned beasts'

wellbeing of the deer forest, if anything so terminally enfeebled as a deer forest can exist in a state of wellbeing.

But the deer forest is a transient state, and there are merciful signs that its days are numbered, doomed by a growing desire to put back what should be there, what was there — free forests, resuscitated from native stock. It has begun to happen already in a few small reservoirs of enhanced nature. We are a long way from restoring the dark, primitive tracts of Caledonian wilderness so beloved of bears and wolves and hunting Stuart kings, but there are several thoughtful woodland reintroductions — such as the RSPB's pinewood transformations at

Abernethy, near Perth, and the Woodland Trust's ambitious plans for rejuvenating Glen Finglas in the Trossachs — where nature can thrive and people can work the land.

In every example of these new woods, the first step has been to remove sheep and begin culling the red deer, sometimes by as much as 75 per cent. It sounds cruel, but in reality it approximates to the kind of solution which nature would contrive if it was left to its own devices. Nature would never have presided over the decline of the red deer, from the forest giant it once was to the demeaned beast that haunts today's Highlands.

For the red deer is a forest animal. Mainland Europe still treats it that way, and its red deer are a third bigger, more monarchic, by far than our mountain dwellers. The wellbeing of the species will be achieved only by reducing numbers to a population that can be sustained inside the new woodlands, the phrase "deer forest" redefined — to mean a forest of native trees in which red deer thrive and have no need to fear the debilitations of a mountain winter.

Deer forests, as defined by sporting estates, are reservoirs of anti-nature. They are locked-up places, asphyxiated into a state of all-but-lifelessness, denied the lifeblood of diversity in nature and the oxygen of trees. All this to perpetuate the economics where high deer numbers equals many shooters with money to burn, equals revenue for the landowner.

Which brings me back to the "royal" in my sights. He is too weak and the snow is too deep. He stares bleakly at the long black barrel I have trained on him — a 400mm telephoto lens. I have merely recorded his suffering, not ended it.

EXCLUSIVE OFFER THE TIMES

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When one of the family is missing

Like all good ideas, it seems ludicrous that it had never been thought of before. The National Strays Bureau, which is being launched nationwide this month, is one such brainwave. Sponsored by Winalot, the NSB will become the first national pet registration scheme also to offer a lost and found service. As about 250,000 dogs and perhaps as many cats go missing each year, the scheme has to be considered essential.

The NSB has been operating in the M25 area since August 1995 and, according to Scotland Yard, it has been instrumental in doubling the number of dogs reunited with their owners.

"We are launching nationally this month because the run-up to Christmas is a key time when pets go missing and the necessity for such a service is at its peak," says Romek Kriwald, the director of the bureau. "People may go on holiday, leaving their dog or cat to be cared for by a friend or relative who may not then be aware of the cautions needed to stop the pet from straying."

Alternatively, some people who buy a dog for the first time at Christmas may not be equipped to keep him or her safely indoors or outdoors and a new dog could stray and not be able to find the way back.

The bureau acts as a central register where police, vets, dog wardens and the public can report stray dogs. It operates on a smaller scale for cats. When owners have lost their pet, they simply need to call the Lost and Found Service. If an immediate match for the pet is not found, the details stay on the central register for a month.

"We now have two ways of dealing with the problem of strays throughout Britain," says Mr Kriwald. "The first is the Pet Registration Scheme which costs £7.50 and registers dogs and cats with us for life. We provide the pet with a collar tag with a registration number on it and the telephone number of the NSB. If the pet is found, one call to our offices means we can contact the owners and reunite them."

"The second is through the Lost and Found service, which is the only central register in the country to operate in conjunction with the pet registration scheme."

Guy Walters on a new bureau for lost and found pets

On its present basis the system works well, as Bridie Heppell from Camden, north London, discovered. Gemma, her seven-year-old cross-breed Staffordshire bull terrier decided to slip out the front door a few Mondays ago. "I rang everybody," says Miss Heppell. "The police, the RSPCA, the dog wardens and the NSB."

On Wednesday the NSB reported a match at the Battersea Dogs' Home, but it was not Gemma. Miss Heppell became desperate and put posters up in nearby streets. The following Saturday, the RSPCA informed the NSB that it had found Gemma two miles away

in Holloway, and Miss Heppell was able to pick her up from Battersea on the Sunday morning. "The NSB were brilliant in keeping in touch," she says. "And they were very calming — I was obviously in a bit of panic. My two-year-old daughter was extremely upset. It was like losing a member of the family."

When Gemma returned, she was a bit thin and had a dose of kennel cough, but was otherwise healthy, despite being outside during some of the harshest weather this year. Miss Heppell has now put Gemma on the NSB's register.

Another beneficiary of the NSB is Donna Brodie from Clapham, southwest London. On bonfire night, Amy, her ten-year-old collie-cross, managed to escape from the house, although she had been sedated. "When we came back and found she wasn't there we just felt the worst had happened," says Miss Brodie.

"Amy had been sedated so she didn't get scared by the fireworks, and we were worried that in her drugged state she might have run onto Clapham Common and then got hurt. We spent half the night driving around looking for her."

Miss Brodie called nearly every relevant organisation that she could think of. The police referred her to the NSB, who said a similar dog had been handed in to Battersea Dogs' Home. Miss Brodie was reunited with Amy the next morning. Amy has now been registered with the NSB which, says Miss Brodie, gives her "much peace of mind".

With so many pets going AWOL, the NSB will have its work cut out. It receives about 50 calls a day reporting lost dogs and cats, and at any one time there are at least 4,000 to 5,000 dogs on its register that have been reported missing or have been found. These numbers are expected nearly to double after Christmas, so do remember to keep the front door shut.

● The National Strays Bureau is open 9am-5pm weekdays and 10am-6pm weekends and Bank Holidays. People who have lost their dog should call the NSB Lost and Found Service on 0800 123999 (calls cost £1.50 per minute, up to a maximum of £7.50). To register your dog or cat ring 0900 168220 (all calls charged at local rates).

ADOPT ME



Howie, eight, would enjoy life in a noisy household

HOWIE is a tan and white mongrel, aged eight, who loves people and would benefit from a busy household. He will do anything for toys or treats but needs to learn that he cannot always have things his own way. He has been at the centre since March 1996.

Contact the Dogs' Home Battersea, 4 Battersea Park Road, London SW8 4AA (0171-622 3626).



Welcome home: Bridie Heppell and daughter Georgia, happily reunited with their dog Gemma

A VET WRITES

Q We have just moved and I took Buster, my five-year-old Labrador, for his annual booster injections; the new vet said distemper boosters were needed every two years, and only leptospira and parvovirus boosters were necessary this time. My previous vet always gave the lot. Who is right?

A They are both "right". The primary vaccinations Buster was given as a puppy stimulated his immune system to make antibodies against four potentially fatal diseases: distemper, which includes hard pad, leptospirosis, infectious hepatitis and parvovirus. Immunities wear out unless they are reinforced by contact with natural disease or booster inoculations. A vet who is familiar with the disease pattern in his practising area knows what is the most sensible booster programme for local dogs.

Q Our cat Blackie arrived home with his right upper eye tooth broken off. He is eating without difficulty. How did it happen and will it grow again?

A It could have happened in a fight with another cat. He may have been in a road accident, or fallen and hit his tooth. It will not regrow, and if the stump is still firmly fixed in its socket decay is unlikely.

Q My Lakeland terrier rolls in any smelly mess he finds. Often he has to be bathed when we come back from a walk. Why does he do this, and will repeated baths harm his coat?

A Your dog is trying to disguise his natural scent. This could have helped his ancestors by preventing prey detecting dog-scent until too late. Put him on the lead when you see a smelly mess and congratulate him when he does not roll in it. This won't work every time. Use a gentle shampoo — dog or baby — as often as you like. He spends nights indoors and so will not miss water-repellent oils in his coat.

JAMES ALLCOCK

● Readers should write to The Times Vet, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9KN. Advice is offered without legal responsibility.

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Sight test is an eye-opener

ALTERNATIVELY SPEAKING

This is one for the squeamish who have been seduced by advertisements for laser treatment to improve their sight but who cannot face the operation. The Bates method claims that you can do so naturally.

Dr William Horatio Bates was a turn-of-the-century New Yorker and ophthalmologist who thought that many people wore glasses unnecessarily. That could apply to 60 per cent of British adults who wear spectacles, according to the Eyecare Information Service.

Dr Bates's experiments and clinical observations convinced him that normal sight was variable. Long sight, short sight and astigmatism can improve as well as deteriorate with the strain of artificial lighting and computer screens. Like any other muscles, those in the eyes need appropriate rest and exercise.

Aldous Huxley, a Bates fan, put it thus: "The art of seeing is like the other fundamental skills such as walking, talking and using the hands. When the vision has been disturbed, most people must consciously re-acquire the art which, as infants, they were able to learn unconsciously. The technique of this process of re-education has been worked out by Dr Bates and his followers."

I was reminded of a girlfriend who went to India after a stressful time taking finals at Oxford, where her eyesight deteriorated. After spending a year painting, she returned with perfect sight.

Experts are sceptical. In Britain, Bates teachers are not trained in optometry, although many are in the United States. They are generally frowned on by the eye-care profession, which believes vision is a physiological function based on sensory perception so disorders cannot be reversed. Nor are there clinical trials which prove Dr Bates's claims. But then there are millions to be made from prescribing glasses.

I visited Peter Mansfield, a Bates method teacher, at his clinic near Brighton, Sussex. (he also tours Sheffield, Leeds and Manchester). Until he was 28 he was "incapacitated" without glasses, and it is only since he discovered the Bates method that he has been without them. He says: "I discovered the method after I went to an Alexander technique teacher, who worked on



RACHEL KELLY

Seated in a comfy chair, I read out letters from those cards beloved of opticians. First with, then without glasses. The first surprise is how odd it is to spend an hour without glasses. I reacted by straining to read the letters, but Mr Mansfield had replaced them with three brightly coloured posters — one covered with dancing fish, the other two with abstract shapes. The posters are used to relax the eyes. Part of the Bates theory is that it is strain on the eye muscle which

causes our sight to deteriorate. Not only do the posters relax the eyes but the brain is also stimulated by the colours.

The method works by learning to keep the eyes and mind relaxed while becoming ever more interested in the world," says Mr Mansfield. "Correcting eyesight is as much about correcting a lazy brain as a lazy eye. It is that lack of connection between the brain and the eye muscle which causes the problems. You see clearly when that relationship is normal."

I did various exercises, such as picking a coloured shape and focusing on that in relation to other colours. Then Mr Mansfield used a binoculars, a thin stick with balls at intervals, and showed me how to focus from one ball to another.

He used the letters again to check any improvement in my sight. The C on the top line was initially blurred but after half an hour I could — cross my heart and hope to die — see it clearly.

Mr Mansfield advised that I should spend some time without my glasses every day. "Glasses can be detrimental to the eyes because they inhibit light and reduce the amount of natural variation and movement necessary for good sight," he says. "Giving super-sharp vision may encourage the eyes to become lazy."

He suggested that I should take up table tennis or badminton to improve my hand and eye co-ordination and, great Scott, to try playing without my glasses. How lucky that I am uncompetitive.

"When you take your glasses off, don't strain. Just look," he says. "There is plenty of interest to see. The light, for example, can be more interesting without glasses. It is not about practising exercises every day as trying to change your approach to seeing."

The best tip was his technique for "palming". By cupping your hands round your eyes, you induce a warming chamber in which closed eyes relax. Try it when you are next caught in a jam.

● For information and a list of teachers, send a £1 coin taped to your name and address to The Bates Association, PO Box 25, Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex, BN43 6ZF. Peter Mansfield, phone and fax 01273 424752.



Peter Mansfield takes a client through the Bates method

Bates method

- What it is: Claims to improve sight by resting and exercising the eye muscles.
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- Costs: From £20-£40 for an hour's lesson.

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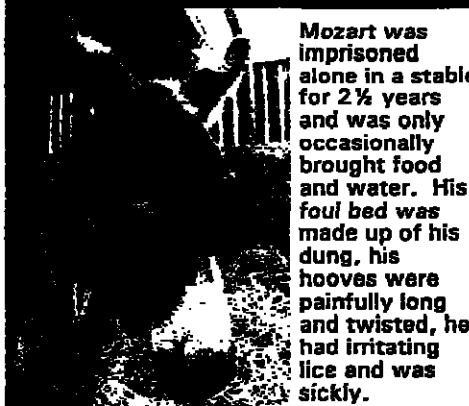
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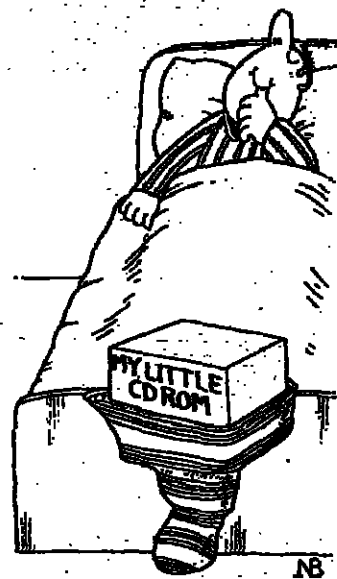
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Do you get the message, Santa?



Dear Father Chris

Please excuse me for raising this. I realise it must be painful, but we parents are at a critical stage here. It's this belief business. We're doing our best but round every corner lurks a poisonous tongue - a puny whisper, as the Bard put it. The unbelievers are thick on the ground.

Under our roof, of course, the merest scintilla of openly expressed doubt among the older children means instant excommunication for the festive season. We find that effective. Your reputation is safe here for the moment but, to be honest, I'm not sure how long we can sustain it.

This is in no sense meant as a criticism of your products which, in my view, leave the other

giveaways standing. "It could be you," leers the Lottery. "It will be you," you chorle, and it always is. Personally I find it far sadder to believe you than in a scratchcard. You have a 100 per cent record here. And yet, and yet... some children, quite young ones, have lost faith, and so have their parents. Thus does the fabric of society unwind.

Part of it may be wonderland fatigue. There is so much ritual these days. Halloween has risen from nowhere since I was a boy, and so has the Tooth Fairy, about which I confess some ambivalence, though I wouldn't go as far as a friend who simply tells her children in the morning, "Halloween's over. That really is letting the side down. I say "about

PERSONAL LIFE

which" because the TF is an androgynous creature, unlike your good self. I have often wondered why we don't hear more of Mother C, though that's not something I have ever been asked about. Which brings me to my first point.

We were talking about your forthcoming visit the other day and my daughter, who, as you know, is eight, voiced her doubts in the usual way. "Freddie says Father Christmas isn't real. He says it's his Dad who's been seen falling over." To which I gave the standard response: "Freddie is a silly little boy. I wouldn't say that kind of thing too loud. Father Christmas might hear." "OK," she

said, and then came the punchline. "But how old do I have to be before you tell me the truth?" Perhaps you could mull that one over for a bit and slip me the authorised answer.

The school must bear some of the blame, because this weekend's homework is to separate fact from opinion about your, er, role. When I asked my daughter what she wanted this Christmas, she replied: "I don't know. I'll have to go and look at some adverts."

Well, it is confusing for them. Your doppelgängers have set up their ghettos everywhere (and this multi-identity is another tricky one to explain). American children's films can usually be relied on for reassurance and confirmation, but now we have *Top Story* confusing

the message, and I hope for your sake you're well stocked with Buzz Lightyears and Woodies.

But the ersatz and commercial tack of the modern yuletide should never be allowed to dispel faith. I hope you will accept that I certainly haven't here. You put the magic into Christmas, we say. The fact that I am knocking this out on the old word processor is evidence of that. My daughter is popping in and out as I write.

Which brings me to my second point. You may have noticed that this note is presented in a rather drab fashion, no variety in the type size, no colour, hoily leaves, decorative borders. The truth is, our machine is on its last legs. The spacebar has been sticking badly since the Ribena spillage of 1991. The software is outdated. To be

blunt, my lot won't even use it for their homework. There's a lot of peer pressure out there.

What I'm coming to is, you've probably noticed in the papers all these puffs for multimedia PCs with fax/Internet modems, printers, etc. Money is a trifle short here at present, so the point is, if you could see your way to slipping one on the sleigh, it would strengthen your credentials in this house considerably.

Almost any brand will do, but include an eight-speed CD-Rom drive and a decent warranty. Things aren't as reliable as they used to be.

Trusting in you,

PETER BROWN

PS. Hope you like this year's winter warmer. It was on special offer at Tesco's.

PPS. If you could throw in a few computer games, that would be really great.

Cool fix for the brand addicts

Jill Parkin discovers today's children are swayed by makers' labels in their search for the new and funky

Saturday is the brand babes' main day out. They're in the shopping malls and the supermarkets. You may even have one or two in the back of your car. Sunday shopping is for sabbies and oldies, the sort of people who buy own-brand, money-saving, multipacks of crisps in the morning and through the garden centres in the afternoon.

Saturday is for the family's serious shopper. The brand babe may be old enough to hunt with friends, to hang groupie-like around River Island or Next, or young enough to coerce you into favourite brands of fizzy drink, yoghurt and cereals.

These are the youngsters who watch ads and follow trends. They know that if a label is worth buying, it's worth wearing on the outside. Like my step-daughter's Levi's. No other jeans will do for her. "It's the fit, and, yeah, the label," she says. "Cool. You can always tell Levi's. Like a Picasso."

The cool, the funky, the excellent. They spend their Saturdays in search of it. At the opening of the lunchbox in junior school and in the common room at sixth-form college, they dread exposing themselves as sad, tragic or crusty. You may think that socially, culinarily and texturally that describes a Pot Noodle, but among 11-19 year olds that's a top brand you're talking about.

I discussed such things with Miss Levi's in the kitchen as she laced up her Kickers, carefully tucking the laces out of sight, natch. "I have a friend," she said, "who buys everything at Next. She buys at least one thing every Saturday. And then she sounds trendy on Mondays. Do you reckon she's insecure?" Probably. I suspect half

those county women who camouflage themselves in respectable camel and blue checks from Burberry and Aquascutum have a shady past.

Levi's, Nikes, DMs, Reeboks and Kickers. My steps aren't full-blown brand babes but certain labels have filled our house over the weekends for many years now. Youngsters like to be part of a pack. It gives them confidence. In the case of Miss Levi's and her pack, enough confidence to pronounce Nikes as one syllable and swear they're right.

Parents of pretenses are bullied into Chipie shirts, Heads sports bags and Muddy Fox mountain bikes. Sega and Nintendo computer games, Walkers crisps, and Cadbury's cream eggs.

Television converts into peer pressure. My four-and-a-half-year old, who hardly ever sees television, insisted on packed lunches so that she could have a Barbie lunchbox like her friends. I hated the idea and we ended up with the compromise of Forever Friends.

This week she's taking Hula Hoops for her morning snack - very much a brand choice among the junior babes. She's had enough of those little bags of Tesco saver crisps.

And the children's panel of the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency would understand that. They are a 60-strong taste jury convened regularly to research children's fads and fashions, to run adverts by them and see what they think. So I went along to meet the Misses Little of Penge, veteran members of the panel. These are not rich children who can have anything. They're thoughtful and intelligent youngsters from a large south London family who have hand-me-downs as well as a say in the nation's corporate advertising budget.

Jessica Little, 12, is a Lit

fizzy drink freak, who eats Hula Hoops off her fingertips. She was wearing a pair of those big, shiny, red lace-ups which look so ugly to us but produce beautiful feet. "It is true I dragged Dad up to the Doc Marten Centre in Covent Garden to buy them," she said. "I wanted to make sure I had the right sort."

Big sister Sharon, 28, who works for JWT, reckoned they were lucky to have parental approval for trendy footwear. "It was Clark's for me until I was about 15," she said. "But, mind you, we all have to eat bran flakes."

What would they rather eat? "Frosters," said ten-year-old Lucie, who was nursing a Coca-Cola bottle. "Coco-Pops," said seven-year-old Alice, who prefers Pepsi. Typical, according to JWT research.

Sixteen-year-old Victoria, a Linda McCartney veggie product fan, has recently retired from the JWT panel because of age. "Veteran though she is, she finds C&A and Littlewoods "a bit crusty and old", preferring to shop at Top Shop and Miss Selfridge.

"People are influenced by the ads, but mainly by each other," she says. According to JWT research, the supermarket brand babe "herds" the trolley-pusher to favourite brands by exploiting the parent's fear of losing sight of a child. The child will run ahead, drawing you in her wake, or simply disappear and be found standing next to the Beano, still a top publication for seven to ten-year-olds.

Victoria and her mates buy their smellies at Body Shop. "Not just because of the animal thing, but because it's nice in there. It's friendly and smells good," she said. "It's groovy." Students of teenage



The Misses Little of Penge, south London, with their mother, Rosemary, are members of an advertising agency's research panel into what's groovy

Ruth Gledhill watches morning assembly, with its new twist to Advent

Be alert, says the dozy vicar

THE CHILDREN, some so tiny they could barely clamber up the stairs, filed into the assembly room. The hall, with its polished wooden floor, emulsioned walls and upright piano, was the epitome of traditional church school. A lone candle flickered on a stool at the front as the older children, whose genius, even at the age of 11, in customising their red, grey and blue school uniforms needed to be seen to be believed, seated themselves on benches at the back. The smallest, aged three, clustered cross-legged on the floor at the front, giggling, watched benevolently by teachers, also young, who were seated around the sides of the hall.

This was the daily assembly at St John the Baptist, an infant and junior school in Hackney, north London. Although some of the children are Sikh, Muslim or Hindu, parents are aware when they send them to St John's that the entire school day is underpinned by Christian principles.

It all starts with the assembly. "It is a point of focus for the day," says the headmaster, Russell Reeves. "It is a time to worship, sing and pray together."

The school is in an area where vandalism is low and community spirit high. "Get up, out of bed," we sang in the first song, the children stretching and touching their toes as the words demanded. This was the start of Advent, and the theme was "get ready."

The children seemed genuinely concerned when Mr Reeves apologised for the failure of the local vicar, the Rev Malcolm Macnaughton, of St John's church next door, to show up. "I'm not sure what I'm going to do," he said. Then, a hand appeared from behind some boxes on the stage, then a sleepy head with a wide yawn. The children



Assembly time at St John's school

collapsed into laughter. The vicar crawled out, muttering: "I'm sorry, sorry." He had arrived early but had fallen asleep, he explained. But it was Advent, and this meant everyone there had to be ready.

He likened himself to the "foolish virgins", of Matthew 25, who failed to take oil for their lamps and dozed off when waiting for the bridegroom. "Keep watch, for you never know when the hour is coming," said the vicar, to the watchful children. And, to make sure the message sank in, he invited ten boys and girls on to the stage to enact the wise and foolish maids. "Jesus told us that story so that we would always be wide awake," he said. "What He meant was that we should always be alert. There are some people who run around all the time, buying things in the shops,

AT YOUR SERVICE

★ A five-star guide ★

HEADMASTER: Russell Reeves

ARCHITECTURE: Victorian redbrick, with children's artwork decorations. ★★

TALK: Entertaining clowning with a serious side by the local vicar, the Rev Malcolm Macnaughton. ★★

MUSIC: Sue Bruce, part-time music teacher and pianist, vigorously led the enthusiastic children in a series of modern worship songs. ★★

LITURGY: Prayers and songs around a central dramatic task. ★★

AFTER-SERVICE CARE: Mince pies served after church carol service next week. Some of the children can be seen tomorrow in the nativity play at the 10.15am service at St John's church.

SPIRITUAL HIGH: A gentle awakening. ★★

doing sport; they might as well be asleep, because they don't know what's going on around them. When Jesus said stay awake, he meant stay awake to God."

Mr Reeves led us in prayer. "Dear God, help us to wake up. Help us to be kind to each other. When there is an argument in the playground, help us not to get involved. Help us to bring happiness, peace and friendliness to the people we meet. We can do that by smiles, kind words and helping each other."

In spite of a lasting suspicion that the children who enjoyed it most were those allowed to slide dramatically on to the floor and feign sleepiness, there was no question they were wide awake and attentive for their ensuing lessons.

St John the Baptist School, Crondall Street, Hoxton, Hackney, London N1 (0171-739 4928).

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Islanders on Huahine, about 100 miles northwest of Tahiti, enjoy a sleepy and unsophisticated lifestyle on their lush and mountainous land. With its small population, Huahine seems to epitomise the atmosphere of French Polynesia

A brush with Gauguin's Nature World

Following in some celebrated footsteps, Joe Roberts discovers the heady atmosphere and musical language of the islands of French Polynesia

Our flight arrived at Faa'a Airport in Tahiti at five in the morning. As we left the plane the rain pelted down with such force that, by the time we had crossed the Tarmac to the terminal, we were soaked. Bleary-eyed musicians strummed ukuleles as we shuffled, dripping, through Immigration and Customs.

Then we were presented with garlands of frangipani blossoms and assurances that the rainy season was over, the shower being most unusual for May. Indeed, as soon as the sun rose, the sky cleared, but the air remained clammy and the smell of flowers almost sickly. However, it does not take long to acclimatise and within a few hours I was enjoying the heady atmosphere.

The Tahitians are good-looking in a fleshy, pumped-up way; the men are tall, well proportioned and extravagantly muscled; the women are languid and have soulful eyes. Their language sounds musical but somewhat melancholy, full of sighs and soft-broken vowels. They have a brooding manner: often, in conversation, they shrug and say, "Fiu," denoting boredom or quiet despair — not so much gloomy as reflective.

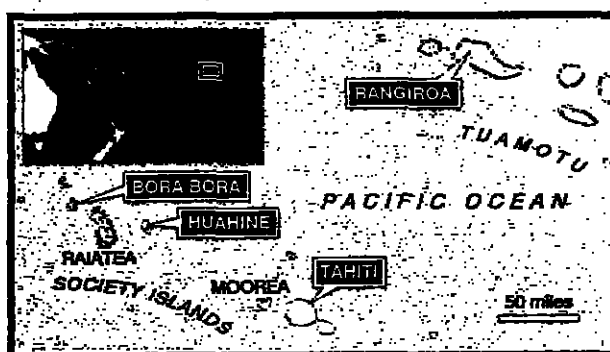
Although Tahiti is the most populated island in French Polynesia, it has not lost its beauty. On our way to the Gauguin Museum, we stop-

ped to look at the cave at Mara'a, hidden from the road by a plantation of travellers' palms, tall flamboyantes and porcelain roses. The trees gave way to ferns and the grotto appeared like a great semi-circular archway filled with blue-grey water. A trick of the light makes the far wall seem much closer than it is; Gauguin once claimed it took him an hour to swim to the back of the cave. The Tahitians believe it is a haunted place, fed by an underground river that flows from the spirit world.

The Gauguin Museum is spread across a series of pavilions in a botanical garden. It contains few original works but tells the story of the painter's life. I realised how skilfully he portrayed the mysterious listlessness (the "fiu" mentality) of the Tahitians.

Throughout the 19th century, various creative escapists headed for French Polynesia. Gauguin initially came because he had read Pierre Loti's account of island life. Herman Melville, Robert Louis Stevenson, Jack London and, in this century, Rupert Brooke all came in search of an earthly paradise.

Less well known are the dotty American idealists who were known as Nature Men.



They formed a nudist colony at Teahupo'o, eating fruit from the trees, sleeping with their heads pointing north and lecturing visitors on the evils of materialism. The colony survived until the 1940s.

The next stop on our trip was the lush, mountainous island of Huahine, about 100 miles northwest of Tahiti. It is much less populated and we felt closer to the real Polynesians. The main town of Fare is a sleepy, unsophisticated huddle of fruit stalls and tiny cafes where people from all over the island come to pass the time of day. We were shown a stream heaving with monstrous eels, protected, apparently, by taboo; some lifted their heads from the shallow water to pant like dogs.

I met a man with half his entire body covered in blue tattoos, like a harlequin suit. He told me the tattoos were his own design and had taken more than a year to achieve. That evening the same man performed an improbable cabaret at our hotel, a lengthy disquisition on the coconut palm and its role in Polynesian life. It was interesting for about five minutes; by the end the dining-room was practically deserted.

Huahine was the final home of Omai, who in 1773 became

the first Tahitian to visit Britain, the protégé of Joseph Banks. Omai was lionised as the personification of the Noble Savage. Reynolds painted his portrait and he dined with Dr Johnson, who found his behaviour elegant. Presented to George III, Omai inquired, "How do, King Tosh?" Before his return to Tahiti four years later, he was showered with expensive gifts.

In his homeland, however, Omai was a commoner and his celebrity was regarded as a snub to the Tahitian monarchy. Captain Cook decided Omai would be safer in Huahine and had a stone cottage built for him to house his Western treasures. Unfortunately the cottage was looted and burnt as soon as the British sailed away.

Bora Bora, the most glamorous destination in French Polynesia, with its crystalline waters and emerald peaks, has become a millionaires' playground. Perhaps the worldly values one goes to French Polynesia to escape from are a little too evident (the Nature Men would have torn their beards out at the luxury), but for a couple of days it was delightful.

Our hotel rooms were cabins on stilts over the water, each one had a raised glass area under which the floor had been cut away; at night, you could turn on a light and watch the exotic fish swarming below. It was fun to swim in the lagoon, then climb the steps up to one's own room.

The island I liked most was Rangiroa, a circular atoll like the rim of a cup, 16 miles across. It is impossible to see one side from another. With comparatively little rainfall its vegetation is rather sparse, but what Rangiroa lacks in botanical splendour it makes up for in submarine beauty.

At Tiputa Pass, the ocean tide rushes into the atoll. A boat took us to the mouth of the pass, then we jumped in with our masks, snorkels and flippers and for well over a mile we drifted with the current, a dreamy, effortless pro-

pulsion. Countless small fish flashed past, all vivid psychedelic colours. We were looking down at an underwater garden of the coral, that rose and fell in decorative undulations, seemed to have been arranged by some subaquatic aesthete. Further down we saw large Napoleon fish (their faces somewhat resemble the Emperor's) and sharks (too well fed in those abundant waters to bother humans) and a great moray eel moving from rock to rock like a billowing velvet ribbon. Most spectacular of all were a pair of gigantic manta rays, like spacecraft cruising through an iridescent galaxy.

I attended Mass in Avatoru, one of the two villages on Rangiroa. It was Whit Sunday (Pentecost). Everyone had gathered in the small church; the old people sat on benches along the walls, the rest of us on carpets on the floor. The women wore green straw hats and white dresses and some people wore T-shirts with "Pentecôte 96" on the back. Men and women had flowers behind their ears.

The ancient Polynesian tradition of chanting histories and creation myths was easily adapted by the missionaries to become the *himene* (hymn singing) of today. And what singing it was: the same intonation and sighing sounds that I had heard in Tahitian speech were turned into limpid harmonies washing over the congregation like gentle waves, each trailed by a few straggling curlicues before the next wave started. The harmonies sounded quite unrehearsed, coming about as effortlessly as breathing.

The Mass lasted two hours. The only boring part was the sermon by the aged French priest, first in French, then repeated in Tahitian, but the singing more than compensated for such doldrums.

• The author was a guest of Air France Holidays.

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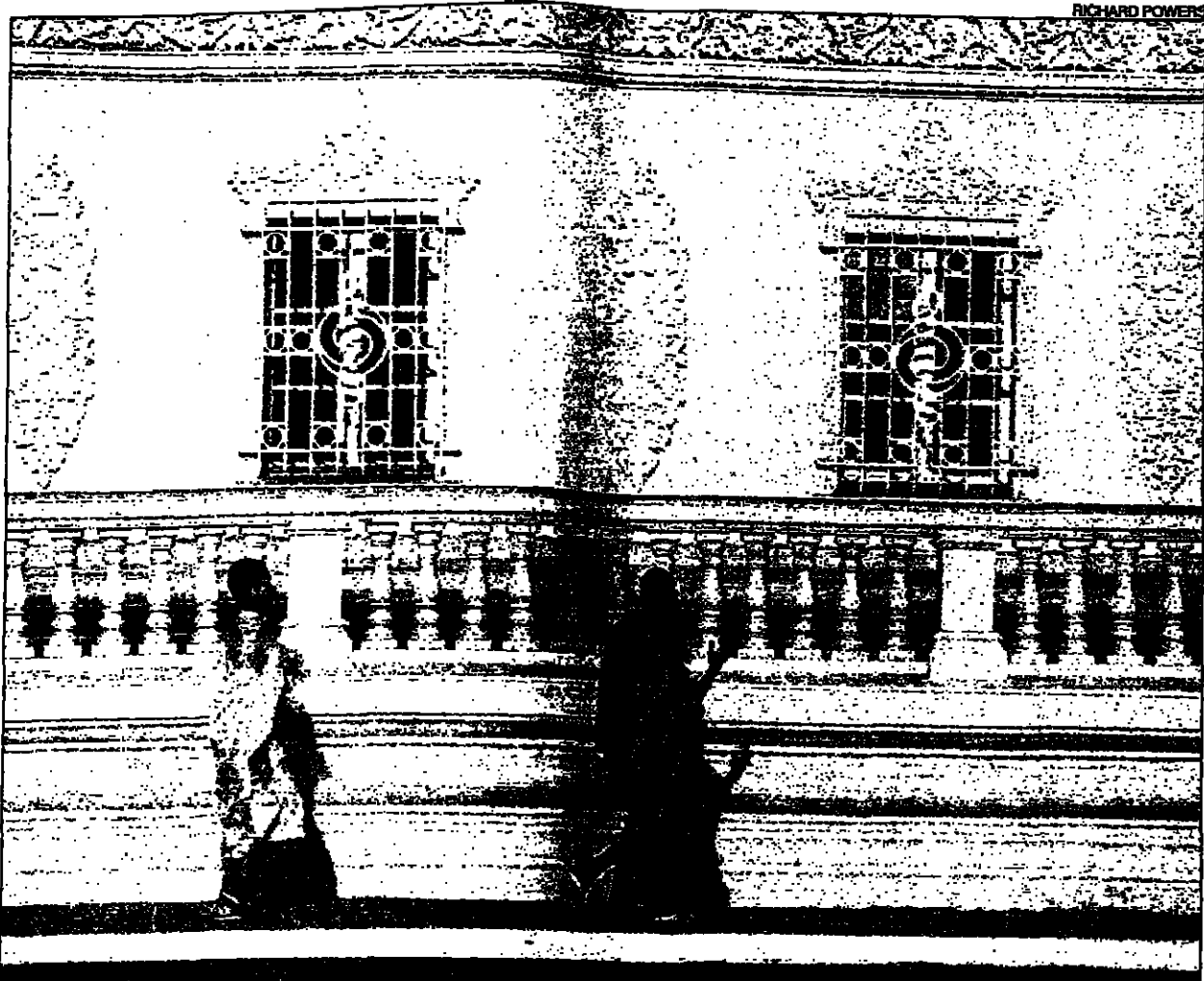
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FRENCH POLYNESIA FACT FILE
■ Air France Holidays (0181-742 6600) offers seven nights B&B at the Moorea Beachcomber Parkroyal for £1,597. A 12-night package, Polynesian Paradise (one night on Tahiti, three on Rangiroa, three on Bora Bora, three on Huahine and two final nights on Tahiti) costs £3,198 for B&B. Polynesian Cruising is seven days and six nights (full board) on a luxury catamaran, visiting Bora Bora, the Bay of Hurepiti, Raiatea and Huahine and one night at the Tahiti Beachcomber Parkroyal for £2,449. All prices include flights and transfers.
■ Reading: The Travel Bookshop (0171-229 5260) recommends *The Moon and Sceptre* by Somerset Maugham (Mandarin, £5.99, ISBN 0 749 30343 3). *Omai* by Herman Melville (Kegan Paul International, £4.95, ISBN 0 710 30133 2).

Cambodia: Away from horrors of the recent past, David Sweetman surveys marvels of the ancient world



Monks pass the heavenly Royal Palace at Phnom Penh but visitors are also directed to Cambodia's hellish past

The marriage of Heaven and Hell

Heaven and Hell is the only way to sum up Cambodia, though it is the latter that tends to dominate any news coverage. Landmines and hostage-taking are the prime stories, a severe setback to the re-launched tourist industry.

First impressions of the capital, Phnom Penh, are pure heaven. A sleepy French colonial town of ochre stucco villas stretching languidly along the banks of the Tonlé Sap river, just above the point where it joins up with the Mekong. Heaven is the delicately spired Royal Palace and the nearby Silver Pagoda, but there is hell, too, and the people of that tortured land are understandably keen that visitors should learn something about that side of their lives.

Twenty years ago, when the Khmer Rouge took over, it was enough to wear spectacles to be marked down as Westernised and carted off to Pol Pot's torture centre in a small

suburban school chillingly dubbed S-21. This is now a museum and, while the temptation is to give it a miss, a visit is essential if you want to understand the country and its people. It is a shattering experience. Only the constant reminder that you are watching a presentation, a show if you like, can help you to take the shock of the first tiny classroom with its rusted metal bedstead and set of heavy leg-irons on the floor, and its photographic horrors.

Some visitors were angered by what they saw, others fell silent. I was just relieved that I could get through it and, having done so, I was less worried about the next stage, the drive out of the city to the notorious Killing Fields at Choeung Ek, where the torture victims were finally executed and dumped in mass graves.

Having already seen a photograph of the high, glass-fronted Buddhist stupa in which hundreds of human skulls are displayed, I was



able to steel myself for the reality. What finally undid me was a notice near the entrance that recorded the history of these dreadful events and tried to describe what was done to the people whose corpses were found in the surrounding fields. It began in appropriately sonorous English, but gradually began to break up as the writer struggled to express the unspeakable, stumbling at the almost childlike "... and they did all these tortures on the skinny body".

I couldn't read any more; I knew it was time to leave.

Thankfully, this searing lesson in the darker side of human nature was suspended when I flew off to visit the ancient ruins of Angkor in the north of the country. This is heaven, three days being taken round the awesome remains of one of the world's great civilisations.

Set within the encroaching jungle, the towered temples and sculpture-encrusted palaces are the fruit of 400 years of Khmer culture. There is so much to see you need at least three days to get round what the French called the *Grand Circuit* that starts with the temple of Angkor Wat and radiates out, ending up at Ta Prohm, the one temple that the restorers decided to leave untouched.

In a way, you ought to start in that eerie ruin where the roots of giant banyan trees have broken through the walls and merged into the twisted architecture. This is the original for all those "Temple of Doom" fantasies and gives some idea of what the first explorers must have felt when they hacked their way through the undergrowth and stumbled on these ghostly halls.

Only after Ta Prohm can you fully appreciate the labours of the French archaeologists who carefully re-assembled the other buildings. For me, the most stunning of these is the Bayon, the temple of 49 huge towers each with four gigantic, weirdly smiling faces of the Hindu god

Avalokitesvara. This is the key image of Angkor, the surreal head found on postcards and in guide books, yet nothing quite prepares you for the vast inhuman scale of the real thing. Like the pyramids and the Great Wall of China and all the other examples of the monumental, one's reactions veer from admiration at the skill and effort to despair at the megalomania of those who commanded that they be built.

More than a kilometre of bas-relief carvings run like a giant strip-cartoon in three levels round the outer walls of the Bayon. And far from resembling the static, formal friezes found in Egyptian tombs, these are vivid scenes of battle in which more than 10,000 life-like figures act out incidents from Hindu mythology, ending with the great victory of the Khmer armies over their enemies, the Cham.

This drama unfolds with all the movement and zest of a Hollywood epic. From on high, the Great King orders his troops into battle, trumpeting elephants lumber forward, hundreds of spear-carrying warriors march in unison, while further on the enemy brings up reinforcements aboard a flotilla of galleons that pitch and toss on waters teeming with giant fish. To no avail; the Khmer warships triumph and again we see the Great King, this time on a floating pavilion, a giant figure surveying his victory.

Few films are ever that good and the visitor can live out the experience a little further on from the Bayon at the remains of the royal parade ground, where you can stand at the spot on the high stone terrace, supported by massive sculpted elephants, where the living king reviewed his troops in scenes that were the originals for those depicted on the temple walls.

Standing there, you can almost hear the tramp of marching feet and the groans of the enemy prisoners on their way to slavery or death. But then you pull back. With S-21 and the Killing Fields fresh in the memory, flirting with such things, even in daydreams, seems wrong. Cambodia has this effect.

In a reversal of the usual, it is the present that informs the past. Which is why you have to see both Heaven and Hell, however unsettling the experience may be.

● David Sweetman's novel, *A Tribal Fever, set in West Africa*, is published by André Deutsch at £15.99.

CAMBODIA FACT FILE

- Return flights to Phnom Penh, via Bangkok, start from £679 with Thai Airways (0171-499 9113), and in January from £620 with Singapore Airlines (0181-747-0007), via Singapore.
- You can arrange an individual holiday through Regent Holiday (UK), 15 John Street, Bristol BS1 2TR (0117-21 1711). Prices vary according to the itinerary chosen but, as an example, a single traveller might have to pay about £790 on top of the return air fares, for five days in Phnom Penh and Angkor Wat.
- The easiest way to see the country is with a group tour as an extension to a holiday in either Thailand or Vietnam. Magic of the Orient, 2 Kingsland Court, Three Bridges Road, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 1HL (01293 537700, fax 01293 537888), offers a three-night tour, including Phnom Penh and a day in Angkor, for £480, including internal flights, accommodation, all meals and sight-seeing, but excluding international flights.
- Explore Worldwide, 1 Frederick Street, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 1LQ, (01252 319448, fax 343170) offers a range of tours across Indo-China, combining visits to Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia. Example: 12 days in Laos and Cambodia at £1265, including all flights, and B&B at hotels.
- Visa are issued on arrival. You need a passport valid for six months from the date of arrival, two passport-size photographs.
- Vaccination is recommended against typhoid, polio and hepatitis A, and a course of anti-malaria tablets. See your GP.
- Cambodia is hottest in April, coolest in January, rainiest Nov-Mar and May-early Oct. Wear light cotton clothing.
- Reading: Sarah Anderson of the Travel Bookshop (0171-229 5260) recommends: *Angkor: Heart of an Asian Empire*, by Bruno Dagens (Thames & Hudson, £6.95, ISBN 0 50036 054 3), *Sideshow*, by William Shawcross (Hogarth Press, £12.99, ISBN 0 70120 944 5), *Passage Through Angkor*, by Mark Standen (New Holland, £29.99, ISBN 1 85366 535 6), *Cambodia Travel Survival Kit* (Lonely Planet, £9.99, ISBN 0 86442 447 7).

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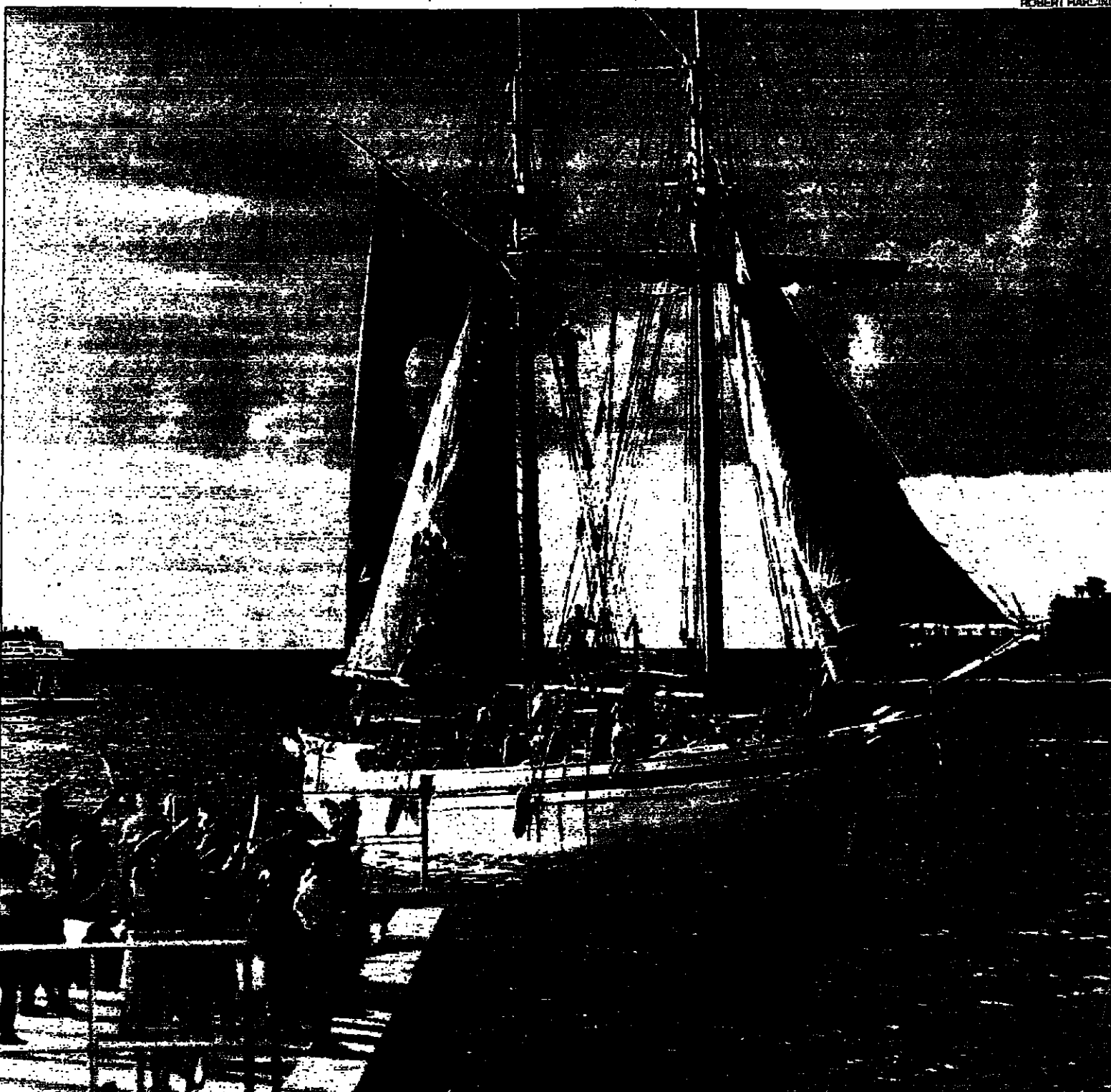
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See The Times Magazine page 40.

China

Grand Cayman and the Bahamas: Adventures in a rich man's world; and a stroll round the palace of love



Celebration time: A pirate ship circles the jetty at Georgetown, the capital of Grand Cayman, at the start of festivities marking Pirates' Week

Dances with stingrays

Stingray City. A breezy boat ride through turquoise sea and there it is — a sandbar in the ocean where the water is only a few feet deep and where the stingray, normally a private fish, comes with 15 or so others to party with humans. Brushing you with suede-soft wings, it nibbles gently at your fingers in search of food.

"That's all very well," I said to the tanned girl at Red Sail Sports "but is it safe?" She looked bewildered, and then her face cleared. "Oh yes, the boat is perfectly safe," she said earnestly. "We carry out regular checks."

This sang-froid seems common to all divers and snorkellers. "Fantastic morning," they yell as they hoist off their oxygen tanks. "Saw two sharks. They were this close."

Ask them casually if they weren't just a little anxious when the hammerheads hovered into view and they give you the half-pitying, half-patronising smile reserved for landlubbers. The sharks, despite being this big, are perfectly safe, they explain, and you don't know what you're missing. Honestly.

But I was not seduced by the prospect of a frolic with a stingray, no matter how sociable. Happily, there are many other distractions on Grand Cayman. In my limited experience, it is unlike other Caribbean islands for one good reason — money.

Legend has it that it became a tax haven in 1788 after George III decided to reward the islanders for rescuing all the passengers from a wrecked convoy of ships carrying merchants from Jamaica to England. Whatever its history, its wealth is obvious.

It is a curious but comfortable mixture of English, American and Caribbean influences. In Georgetown, the

FACT FILE

- Seven nights' room-only accommodation at the Grand Pavilion (001 345 947 5656), with return British Airways flights and transfers, costs from £979. Information and reservations: Caribbean Connection, 01244 341131.
- Red Sail Sports offers four-hour snorkelling trips for £40, which includes use of equipment and lunch. Reservations: 00 1 345 949 8745.
- Atlantis Submarines offers hour-long trips on its 18-seater submarine to depths of 100ft. Prices start from £23 for a supersaver rate available on Tuesdays and Fridays, and from £37 on other days. For reservations, telephone 00 1 345 949 8383.
- Car Hire with Avis/Cicco (00 1 345 99 2468) from £128 a week for a Suzuki Alto.
- The Cayman Islands Department of Tourism, 0171-491 7771.
- Reading: The Travel Bookshop (0171-229-5260) recommends *The Weather Prophet. A Caribbean Journey* by Lucretia Stewart (Vintage, £6.99, ISBN 0 099 59761 6), *Caribbean Islands Handbook* by Sarah Cameron (Footprint, £14.99, ISBN 0 900 75175 4), *Jamaica and the Cayman Islands* by James Henderson (Caribbean Guides, £10.99, ISBN 1 860 11021 5), *The Diver's Handbook* by Alan Hamilton (New Holland, £16.99, ISBN 1 853 68745 6).



tiny, super-clean capital, you will find a whitewashed public library which would not look out of place in Suffolk; a cluster of jewellery shops, including Tiffany's (although this is very user-friendly and offers duty-free prices); a vast bank on every corner (Cayman claims to have more financial institutions than New York) and an engaging "don't worry, be happy" philosophy.

If there is crime here, it is well-hidden and likely to be of the fiscal kind (although locals resent their island's image as a sun-baked depository for dubious wealth). Tourists are not warned to avoid the streets after dark.

We wandered around most nights and encountered only warmth and courtesy. So friendly are the locals that, stopping one day in our hire car to ask a passer-by for directions, she initially assumed that we simply wanted to say hello. During our week's stay, the most dramatic crime the local paper could

come up with was a single burglary. The flip side to so much wealth is that food and drink are expensive. A bottle of beer or a glass of dry white wine can cost £4-£5, while a meal for two in a "medium-priced" restaurant came to around £75 for two courses and a bottle of wine.

Yet some of our best nights out were also the cheapest. The Paradise Grill and Bar, just outside Georgetown, with its white plastic tables and chairs, offers what is considered a cheap meal (£40 for two) on Grand Cayman. But the food, though basic — grilled fish, steak, hamburgers — is delicious and the view across Hog Bay is unparalleled.

Thanks to the excellent babysitting service offered by our hotel, the Grand Pavilion, we were able to enjoy the glorious sunsets in peace. If you have children, this is the place to stay. The hotel is much smaller than its glitzy

neighbour, the Hyatt, but it is also much prettier, with a powerful waterfall surging into the pool, which is illuminated by fairy lights. It is also high on comfort. The service, which starts with a chilled glass of champagne the instant you arrive, is faultless, leaving you feeling cosseted. And although the hotel is not on the waterfront, the beach is only a five-minute amble across the road; a private section provides huge umbrellas, cushioned loungers, bar, attendants, towels, glossy magazines and vanilla sand.

All this does not, of course, come cheap. One fellow guest raced Porsche as a hobby, and most people appeared to have flown Club class. But as you sip your cocktail and gaze at the cruise-ship daytrippers broiling crossly farther along the beach without the benefit of the hotel umbrellas, you can't help but reflect that it is worth every penny.

At 93F, it is certainly hot but even Isabelle, our ten-month-old baby, adapted easily (although she and I both caught colds, an almost inevitable result of the over-enthusiastic air conditioning). Her body clock, though, did not reset. By 9pm, she was still raring to go. Which was where the babysitters Hyacinth and

Catherine came in. Rigorously vetted and approved by the hotel, they (in common, it seems, with most islanders) are naturals with children. At three Cayman dollars an hour (£2), it was money well spent, allowing us the almost forgotten luxury of uninterrupted time together for a few evenings.

Meanwhile, Stingray City kept not so much beckoning as accosting us at every turn. Everywhere we went, there were posters advertising it, and evangelical entreaties from those who had just experienced it to go, go, go. They're this big and so gentle. Honestly.

But so little time, so much to do. We went down to 100ft on the Atlantis submarine, the only time I have ever yearned (unsuccessfully) for a close encounter with a shark. We drove most of Cayman's 28 by four miles, taking in the turtle farm, the black volcanic rocks of Hell Point, and the drowsy little villages.

Our penultimate day was spent at Rum Point, where the beach is dotted with broad hammocks, shaded by tall pine trees.

At the Red Sail sports shop were the ubiquitous boards advertising that afternoon's trip to Stingray City. With a sudden surge of perversity, I decided it was now or never. "I'm going," I announced solemnly to my husband, a man who believes that God invented the sea for only one reason — fish, preferably lightly grilled or steamed.

I approached the tanned girl and bravely inquired about the dangers of being stung by a stingray. "Oh sure, they can sting," came the nonchalant reply. "But they never do."

So that was that. No excuses left. And then she added: "But this afternoon's trip has been cancelled. There are two trips tomorrow, though. Do you want to book now?" You can imagine my distress as I told her that we were flying home the following day. On an aircraft this big. Honest.

SANDRA PARSONS
The author was a guest of Caribbean Connection.

Sugar and spice on sunset boulevard

Omate iron gates swing open to reveal two enormous statues of Aphrodite and Adonis. Romantically lit palm trees sway in the background, and an extravagant fountain dominates the reception area.

Welcome to the Palace of Love in Nassau, the Bahamian capital, which goes under the classic name of Sandals Royal Bahamian Resort and Spa. The Sandals string of resorts across the Caribbean, of which the Royal Bahamian is the latest, is for couples only. Lone wanderers must endure pitying glances from the many pairs who drift dreamily by, joined at the hip.

No expense has been spared in turning this sizeable plot on Cable Beach into a temple to hedonism. A large turquoise pool lies at the heart of an artfully constructed swath of pillars, arches, balconies and balustrades, all painted in the colours of a confectioner's palette. Six floors of luxurious rooms, most with balconies and all with fresh flowers, overlook this grand playground.

The pool area opens on to a private stretch of powdery beach and looks across to Balmoral Island. Sandals intends to develop the offshore island as a day-trip destination. The beach also has a gazebo, which allows couples to exchange wedding vows while cooing at a tropical sunset.

The love theme is taken to astonishing heights in the resort. Beyond the office marked "Wedding Consultant" there is a sugary mock-up of suburbia, complete with white front doors, flower baskets and neat gardens. This pretified cul-de-sac is where many newlyweds spend their first nights as husband and wife.

There is some respite from coupledom, however. The resort has a superb gymnasium and organises a multitude of watersports, including parasailing, water-skiing and diving. And the spa facilities offer a chance for pampered solitude. But be warned — most

- FACT FILE**
- Sandals Royal Bahamian Resort and Spa offers all-inclusive packages from £240 per couple per week. Call British Airways Holidays on 01293 723161. For a brochure phone Sandals on 0800 442424.
 - BA 0145 222747 has a twice-weekly direct London-Nassau service from Gatwick on Tuesdays and Fridays. Return fares start at £514 for an economy ticket.
 - British citizens do not need a visa.
 - Health: No vaccinations are needed.
 - The Bahamas Tourist Office: 01483 448900.
 - Recommended reading: *The Travel Bookshop* (0171-229-5260) recommends *Islands in the Stream* by Ernest Hemingway (Flamingo, £5.99, ISBN 0 006 54693 5), *The Lucayans* by Sandra Riley (Macmillan, £8.95, ISBN 0 333 53033 5), *An Underwater Guide to the Bahamas* by Rob Palmer (Immel Publishing, £15.99, ISBN 0 917 5182 5).

certain freedom. Tipping is not encouraged, which is a relief because the usual amount is a whopping 15 per cent. The food and drink is fresh, pleasant and varied enough to keep the average guest content for a week.

Amid such cossetting, it would be easy to forget that a marvellous world lies beyond the Palace of Love. Nassau, which lies on the main Bahamian island of New Providence, has some lively eateries. The Poop Deck restaurant, which overlooks the harbour, is noted for its delicious seafood fritters and its eccentric clientele of flamboyant yacht owners, casual tourists and businessmen in dark glasses.

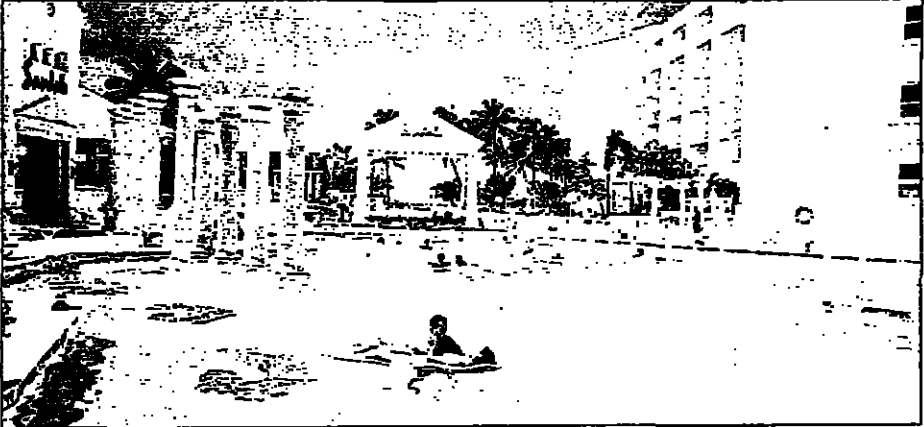
There is plenty of history and culture for those who tire of lying in a hammock. The Bahamas, made up of 700 islands, gained independence from Britain in 1973 and, as the capital of a former British colony, Nassau boasts some fabulous architecture.

In front of Government House, the neo-classical residence of the Governor General, you may glimpse the white-uniformed guards associated with this country. There is a museum showcasing the stunning, glimmering costumes from Junkanoo, the annual Bahamian carnival which originated with the slave trade.

Good shopping possibilities abound, with the daily straw market available for those whose purchasing power does not extend to gems, property or yachts. The casinos are popular for those itching to flaunt some cash.

Nassau's nightlife has its moments — at weekends the famed Zoo nightclub is a swinging place to be, but during the week the dance-floor is empty. Still, this will not be a problem for future Sandals' guests. A nightclub is under construction at the resort so guests will never have to leave the Palace of Love.

ANJANA AHUJA
The author flew to the Bahamas on British Airways as a guest of the Bahamas Tourist Office.



Temple of love: Statues, pillars and palm trees set the scene at the Royal Bahamian resort

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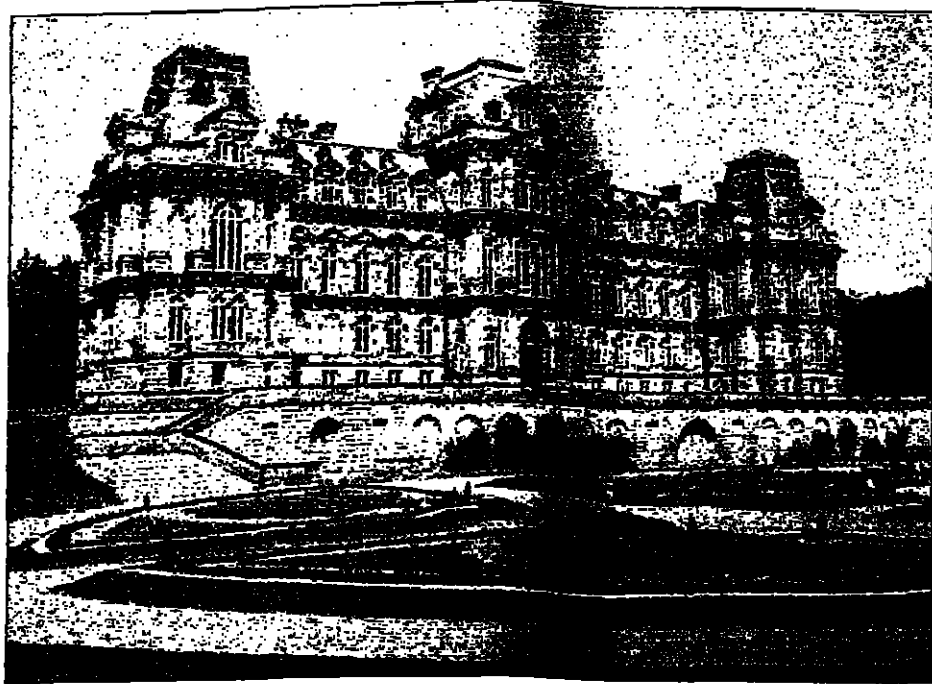
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BBC

Britain: A guided tour by Simon Tait of surprising national treasures; plus London's hidden gems...



The mock-Parisian Bowes Museum in Durham was created "for the education of local folk"

My ten of the best museums

Museums are good," says Lloyd Grossman, a television chef, museum groupie and now the newest Museums and Galleries Commission member. "What other kind of institution is so widely spread throughout the country and has so much that appeals to so many different people?"

But it seems that museums are not only good for you, they have officially become good fun, too. Moreover, they are a growing influence on us.

"We are blessed with around 2,000 museums which are among the best in the world, and many of which are the most eccentric in the world," says Grossman. "So the quantity and quality of British museums has had a powerful effect on the quality of life for people who live here."

Here is an eclectic Top Ten of good, fun, influential museums nationwide (see box for London attractions). Just ten, so there are some big absences: Ironbridge at Telford, Shropshire; Beamish near Newcastle, and Jorvik in York had their influence in the 1980s; the Leeds Royal Armouries transplant is too new to judge; Tussaud's treatment of Warwick Castle is exciting, but is it a museum?

Some of these ten are new and some are old but all have developed and kept up with their visitors and the communities in which they belong. All of them, Lloyd Grossman would agree, are good for you.

Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, Co Durham

This was created in 1892 in a mock-Parisian villa by a benevolent local toff for the education and inspiration of local folk who would never have the opportunity to travel to see great art.

It's nothing like British museums of the period, which were mostly about natural history and archaeology. It is, effectively, a French museum in Britain.

Paintings were cannily bought for the public taste — an El Greco was acquired for £3 — and furniture of the sort which even ordinary people could aspire to.

INFORMATION FOR VISITORS

- **Bowes Museum**, Barnard Castle, Co Durham (01833 690606). Mon-Sat 10am-5.30pm, Sun 2-5pm. Nov-Feb closes at 4pm, closed Dec 24, 25 and Jan 1. Adults £3, children £2.
- **Hull Streetlife Museum**, High Street, Hull (01482 613902). Mon-Sat, 10am-5pm, Sun 1.30pm-4.30pm. £1 non-residents.
- **Jewry Wall Museum**, St Nicholas Circle, Leicester (01533 473021). Mon-Sat, 10am-5.30pm, Sun 2-5.30pm, closed Dec 24, 25, 27, Good Friday. Admission free.
- **Manchester Museum of Science and Industry**, Castlefield, Manchester (0161 832 2244). Daily 10am-5pm, except Dec 24, 25, 26. Adults £4, children £2.
- **Museum of Welsh Life**, St Fagan's, Cardiff (01222 569441). 10am-5pm. Closed Dec 24, 25, £4, children £2.
- **Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum**, East Cliff, Bournemouth (01202 451800). Open Tues-Sun 10am-5pm, closed Good Friday and Dec 25. Admission free.
- **St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art**, Castle Street, Glasgow (0141 553 2557). Daily 10am-5pm, Sun 11am-5pm, closed Dec 24, 25 and January 1. Free.
- **Tower Museum**, Union Hall Place, Derry (01504 372411). Tues-Sat 10am-5pm, seasonal adjustments, closed Dec 24, 25, 26, Good Friday. Adults £3, children £1.
- **Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery**, Castle Street, Carlisle (01228 34781). Open Mon-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 12-5pm, closed Christmas Day. Admission free for locals, otherwise adults £3.50, children £2.50.
- **Weald and Downland Open Air Museum**, Singleton, West Sussex (01243 811348). Open Dec 26-Jan 3, 11am-4pm, otherwise Weds, Sat and Sun until Feb 28. Adults £4.50, children £2.20.

Hull Streetlife Museum

"Forward into the Past" is how the PR material describes this museum, which takes a theme normally shrouded in anoraks — transport — and makes it irresistible. Take the Beverley Turnpike coach, for example, with all its discomfort, noxious fumes and the bustling Victorian racket of mercantile Hull at one end and rural York at the other. Thanks to some Hollywood technology, you never move.

Jewry Wall Museum, Leicester

Run by the beleaguered county museum service, this museum tackles the complex archaeological story of the city and presents it in a compelling way, making the most of being on the site of the 2nd-century Roman wall. It also has the best display on medieval coal-mining thanks to the fantastic recent finds at Coleorton, north Leicestershire.

Manchester Museum of Science and Industry

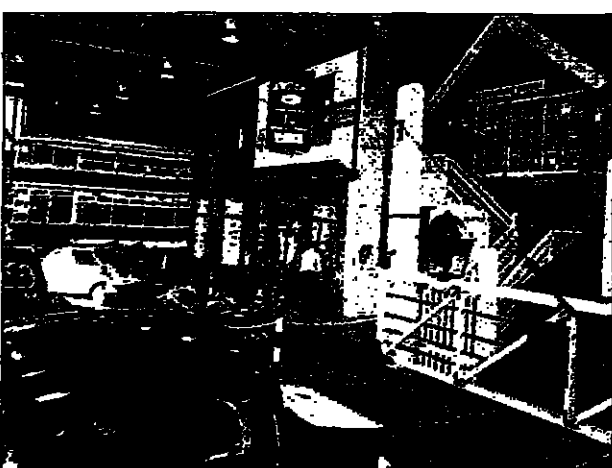
Built in five historic buildings which include the world's oldest railway station, the MMSI seems to grow by the minute. If you have seen one working steam engine, you've seen them all, and even hands-on galleries have become obligatory. But here you can see how Manchester's sewerage system works at first hand, visit the new temporary exhibition gallery hosting this year's blockbuster Star Trek show, and in February a massive treatise on Chinese invention. Another new building, the 1830 railway warehouse, is being converted to house a science theatre and a communications lab.

Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, Bournemouth

This is a rich grandpapa's house, full of the bits and pieces acquired by an inquir-



It's not all stained-glass windows at Glasgow's St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art. This establishment even has a tranquil Zen Garden



Hull's Streetlife Museum has transport as its theme

ing mind over a lifetime — paintings, musical instruments, furniture and delightful mantelpiece knick-knacks. There's also a contemporary art gallery housed in a new wing at Grandpa Russell-Cotes's bourgeois palace.

St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, Glasgow

This museum, which takes its name from the founder of Glasgow, opened in 1993 at a cost of £6 million. Built in the shadow of Glasgow cathedral, it is the world's first museum to take all religions as its theme, so it's not all stained-glass windows. I'm not sure if I like best the tranquillity of the Zen Garden, Dalí's startling Christ of St John on the

Cross, or the mischievous-looking Shiva Natraja in an 18th-century bronze — but they all have echoes in Glasgow's 1990s communities.

Tower Museum, Londonderry, N Ireland

The IRA ceasefire was announced on the same day that the Tower learnt it had won the Museum of the Year Award, which took some of the bite out of the controversy surrounding the museum. There is little compromise in its portrayal of Derry's long, bloody story. The most recent events are told in a video documentary, and bold plans for the winter involve adding Bobby Sands's poetry and the Republican flag used to wrap one of the dead on Bloody Sunday, 1972.

Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery, Carlisle, Cumbria

This was founded in 1877, although thanks to good planning and a £5.5 million facelift, you wouldn't know it. As you would expect from a city with Hadrian's Wall in its back yard, there is a big story to tell, both before and since the Romans. Find out how to ride on a wax plate or how to write a horse as the Romans did. The Viking outrages, medieval Scots' sieges and the picturesque romance of the post-medieval Reiver families that raided across the Border are also covered.

Weald and Downland Open Air Museum, Singleton, near Chichester

In 1969 Chris and Diana Zeuner took on the complex task of preserving the region's ancient buildings by dismantling them and rebuilding them here. So there's a barn, a water mill, a charcoal-burner's hut and cottages and

SIX HIDDEN GEMS IN LONDON

MARTIN CHARLES

■ **Keats House**, Keats Grove, Hampstead (0171-435 2862). This has been restored to look as it did when Keats lived there 1818-20. Includes the engagement ring he gave to Fanny Brawne.

■ **Grange Museum**, in the middle of Neasden Roundabout, Neasden Lane (0181-452 8311). Proving that community museums can be fun.

■ **Florence Nightingale Museum**, St Thomas' Hospital, Lambeth Palace Road (0171-620 0374). Fanny's uncompromising tableaux of Scots' hospital, Crimea.

■ **Cuming Museum**, 151 Southwark (0171-701 1342). There's hardly a more historical borough, with Romans marching up through it one way and Chaucer's pilgrims the other way a dozen centuries later.

■ **Hunterian Museum**, Lincoln's Inn Fields (0171-405 3474). Royal College of Surgeons' extraordinary collections only recently made public. Basically an 18th-century medical teaching facility.

■ **Sir John Soane's Museum**, Lincoln's Inn Fields (0171-430 0175). The personal museum of the architect and polymath, kept as he left it to the nation. Avoid Saturdays because of overcrowding.

The Monk's Parlour in Sir John Soane's Museum

farmhouses. Last year they added the 16th-century Longport House, uprooted from the path of the Eurotunnel line, and this year some 19th-century semis from Ashted, Surrey.

Museum of Welsh Life, St Fagan's, Cardiff

Britain's oldest open-air museum has taken old working buildings from the area and re-created them, complete with traditional craftsmen.

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Beatles reunited in new CD

Microsoft Encarta '97 Encyclopedia. Get The Times Magazine page 49.

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 21

PROCATARTIC

(b) Applied to an external cause which is the immediate occasion of a disease. Also applied generally to the immediate or exciting cause of any effect, as distinguished from its predisposing cause or ground. From the Greek *prokataraktikos* antecedent.

ROCQUET

(c) A pretty little lizard from the Antilles. Perhaps the adaptation of a native name.

PYAL

(b) A raised platform on which people sit. A South Indian word from the Portuguese *payal* a jossing block or mounting stone, from the Latin *podium* a raised place.

PYCNOSTYLE

(a) Having close intercolumnation; having the space between the columns equal to one and a half of a column. Also a building with such a dense forest of columns. From the Greek *pyknos* dense + *stylos* a column.

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...and good museums for a bite to eat. Meanwhile London's futuristic attraction virtually fails to take off

Enjoying food with thought

In the not so distant past museum catering dealt in salads as dedicated as Roman mosaics, sausage rolls like hypocast panicles and fossilised cake. Not so now. Instead we have some museum cafes and restaurants good enough to feature in eating out guides. Here is a selection of the best:

LONDON

British Museum
Great Russell Street, WC1
(0171-636 1555)

I am not going to pretend the British Museum restaurant is any competition for the restaurants in the Louvre, but what visitors will find, if they persevere around the detours caused by temporarily closed galleries, is much better than they might expect: a split level modernist space with white walls, golden wood and an imitation classical frieze in plaster. In the restaurant, colourful salads, are attractively presented: good soups and stews, wholesome bread, and artfully displayed cold dishes. It is so good that, inevitably, there are often queues.

Museum of Mankind, Café Colombia
6 Burlington Gardens, W1
(0171-287 8148)

A cool and airy room with linen-backed chairs, glass tables and blonde wood furnishings, enlivened by some surprise items from the museum collection. The café provides a sanctuary off the over-beaten West End track of nearby Piccadilly and Bond Street. Coffee, as one would hope in a place with this name, is excellent, while the sandwiches are principally Euro-centric, featuring Parma ham and best Brie. The place actually attracts more business customers from surrounding Mayfair than museum visitors. Lunch, dishes, which include office workers' favourites, offer salmon and Caesar salad and buffalo mozzarella with char-grilled vegetables.

Victoria & Albert Museum, The New Restaurant
Cromwell Road, SW7
(0171-938 8500)

Catering at the V&A's self-service restaurant is done with fresh ingredients, a respect for the seasons and some recipes that venture

beyond the domestic vernacular. There is a daily fresh soup and the cold table includes presentable salmon terrine and excellent salads. Sunday brunch, with jazz, is a favourite.

Sotheby's, Sotheby's Café
34-35 New Bond Street, W1
(0171-408 5077)

Auction houses are, for rubber-necks, just free museums whose exhibitions are constantly changing. Sotheby's has the added advantage of having a clubby little snackery, which does breakfast, lunch and tea with appropriate aplomb. The wine list is compiled by the head of the wine department, Serena Sutcliffe MW.

OUTSIDE LONDON

Roman Baths Museum and Pump Room, Bath
Stall Street, Bath (01225 477785)

Waitresses zip about carrying pots of coffee, Bath buns and cinnamon biscuits. A winter lunch might include steak and kidney pie and treacle pudding. Local origins are guaranteed for Bath spa water. Bath sausages and homemade Bath biscuits — and some of the cheeses are local, too.

The Museum of Modern Art, Oxford
30, Pembroke Street, (01865 722733)

The MOMA café is, pleasingly, not as modern as the art — sofas and low-level tables mix with conventional dining furniture. The food is reheated as ordered and the menu, like the exhibitions, is eclectic, with reasonably priced dishes, very satisfactory sandwiches, a generous choice of cakes and puddings, and good coffee and chocolate.

THERE are more good places to come. Diana Crighton, consultant to many museums and art galleries overhauling their catering, and whose book, *English Excursions which Inspire and Refresh* (Excursion Publishing, £8.95), celebrates some of the best, is currently involved in a project with the Getty Museum, Hackney, east London, which will shortly replace with a new restaurant what has hitherto been one of the saddest of buffet bars.

ROBIN YOUNG

Queue! What a torture

Welcome to the next generation of futuristic theme parks. And what better place for an indoor park than in the middle of a city which is wet and cold for at least half of the year? We "take the rocket escalator to another dimension," and it feels good — the steep, long escalator ride to the apex of the Troneworlds centre excites the senses. We are on the threshold of "a galaxy of futuristic experiences in one world".

The kids — there are 12 of them in our party — just cannot wait to encounter the Beast in Darkness. They push and crane their necks round every corner. Eventually, after a 45-minute wait in a queue, we reach its lair — dark but not terribly beastly. There is the occasional roar through some speakers and a few video screens showing a beast going about its daily routines. Then the floor becomes uneven. But the next bit had us all leaping out of our skins — a Segaperson jumped out on us from around a corner. An old trick, but a good one.

He put us on a ride. Now the kids were scared again. Where were they going? They fought to be with an adult. As our cart set off I recalled my first theme-park experience: the Black Hole at Disneyland, California, some 20 years ago. When that cart shot off into the dark, I could only scream out involuntary oaths as it hurtled round its impossible track. It was pure sensation, exhilaration, entertainment.

But the cart in the Beast's lair just trundled. The commentary said something like "the beast has escaped, it's going to get you". But my sweat glands were not activated, my pulse didn't miss a beat, my adrenalin pump failed to kick in. Matthew, aged 8½, yawned. And that was The Beast in Darkness.

Points: Futuricity: 1970s. Beastliness 1/10. Pulse Rate: 72 beats per minute. Screamerometer: 0 decibels.

We skirted the Combat Zone, an arcade full of computer games, and arrived at our next queue for Aqua Planet. Aqua Planet was worth the 45 minute wait. We were strapped into seats, and plunged headlong into a breathless journey. It was virtually real. Things jumped out from the screen, we ducked instinctively to avoid collisions. The illusion worked. It was old technology — 3-D plastic specs, and tilting



Despite the flashy packaging and rooms packed with computer games, the attractions of Segaworld are a serious disappointment

seats — but as the brochure brags, "try telling your brain it's not real".

Points: Excitement: 7/10. Fun: 8/10. We pass another hangar of computer games — Race Track — down a floor to Space Mission. Unfortunately it's mission impossible due to maintenance problems.

Points: Length of Kids' Faces: Very long. Robustness of Ride: 0/10 (it was only a few weeks old).

Down another level and we try to join the queue for Ghost Hunt. It's just malfunctioned so we have to wait five minutes before we can start to queue. The queue, once reached, is long, hot, boring and slow moving. You "try telling your brain it's not real" but this is no virtual queue. Over and above the malfunction, Ghost Hunt has technical problems. It's only working at half capacity.

Ghost Hunt is bizarre. You get in another cart on another train. You trundle round. Targets appear in front of you. You try to shoot them down. Its just like a regular amusement arcade machine, only you're in a cart. Weird.

Points: What was the point?

We spill out of Ghost Hunt to witness a now familiar vista: another sea of computer games, called The Carnival. We spot the next ride — The House of Grandish. The queue is posted as 30 minutes. It hardly moves. As we near the front, the reason becomes clear. This ride is shoebox-sized. It takes four people at a time. Each session takes 4½ minutes. As we crawl to the front of the queue, Segaworld is suddenly revealed to me as a glitzy con-trick.

"We anticipate that a true Segaworld experience will take four hours," so we arrived at 2pm for a 6pm departure. It is now 4.30, a Segaperson tells me that queues are over an hour downstairs, so we are going to miss out on three out of eight rides. That's two and a half hours of queues and malfunctions.

Complaint number three is that the rides are a sideshow. The main space is devoted to playing computer games — acres of them. And complaint number four is that the future has sadly not arrived. The rides are unimaginative, largely old-tech. This is not how I understand interactive virtual reality. There is little total immersion. You are not in control of much. Interactivity is confined to mindlessly bashing a fire button. You do not make choices, you do not interact with other people, you follow a set path. It all lacks sophistication.

I asked for a Sega comment on all this and I am told that when queues have developed pay machines have been put on freepay. A team of engineers from Japan have been working to achieve a "100 per cent efficiency" which should reduce waiting. I am also told that Sega has the largest research and development department in its industry putting it "at the leading edge of virtual reality".

Let's hope 1997 is the year of the hedgehog.

Complaint number one is that you are sold something that Sega does not have: the capacity to fulfill. But you've paid your money upfront. It's rather like paying in advance to get into a supermarket and then finding the most of the shelves half-empty.

Complaint number two is the temperamental technology. Complaint number three is that the rides are a sideshow. The main space is devoted to playing computer games — acres of them.

And complaint number four is that the future has sadly not arrived. The rides are unimaginative, largely old-tech. This is not how I understand interactive virtual reality. There is little total immersion. You are not in control of much. Interactivity is confined to mindlessly bashing a fire button. You do not make choices, you do not interact with other people, you follow a set path. It all lacks sophistication.

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JOHN TRIBE

● The author is senior lecturer in the Faculty of Leisure and Tourism, Buckinghamshire College.
● Segaworld, The Troneworlds, Piccadilly Circus, London (0171-734 2777); £12, children £9.

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THE TIMES

LUXURY RELAIS & CHATEAUX BREAKS ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

The Times in association with Relais & Châteaux offers readers a rare opportunity to make substantial savings on short breaks at some of the best hotels on the other side of the Atlantic. Our exclusive list of 14 participating hotels includes five mentioned in Andrew Harper's *Hideaway Report* for 1996, one of

the most serious and unbiased researches for wealthy and seasoned travellers. (They are indicated with an asterisk.) Each of our Times offers is highly individual, all provide superb hospitality and are in luxurious surroundings. All costs are approximate and are based on the exchange rate at the time of going to press.

Auberge du Soleil, California

A one-night stay includes dinner, breakfast, plus one optional: a one-hour tennis lesson, half-hour massage, bicycles for the day or a two-hour winery tour. Rates: £305 per couple in a VIP suite, including tax and service. Available until May 1, 1997, Mon-Thurs only. Saving: £215.

Blantyre, Massachusetts

Two-night stay includes dinner with wine, breakfast, museum tickets, service charges and taxes, plus upgrade if available. Rate: £143 per person per night. Available midweek between May 9, 1997-June 26, 1997. Saving: 20%.

Chateau du Surcouf, California

Two-night stay includes champagne reception, breakfast, picnic lunch, snowmobile, fitness centre, six-course dinner, tax and service. Rates: £195 per couple for two nights, not incl Fri & Sat. Available until March 31, 1997. Saving: approx £244.

Home Ranch, Colorado

Seven-night full board stay includes six days of ski lift tickets, reg airport shuttles, ski areas shuttles evening entertainment. Rates: £823 per person, based on double occupancy for standard category, plus 4% tax and 15% service charge. Available Jan 5-March 30, 1997. Saving: £210 per person.



Horned Dorset Primavera, Puerto Rico

Seven-night stay in deluxe ocean view room includes half board, regional airport transfers, champagne on arrival, snorkelling and gourmet meals prepared by chefs from Daniel's in New York. Rates: £915 per person, plus 7% tax, 3% service charge. Available until November 4, 1997. Saving: £140 per person per week.

The Inn at Blackberry Farm, Tennessee

Two-night stay includes breakfast, lunch, gourmet dinner, horse and carriage ride, fly fishing lesson. Rates: £274 per night per couple, plus tax and service charge. Available Jan 10-Mar 14, 1997, except Jan 12-15, Feb 11-12 & 20-21. At weekends, minimum stay two nights. Saving: 30%.

Inn at National Hall, Connecticut

Two-night stay by the sea near New York includes pre-dinner cocktails, dinner on one evening and breakfast both days. Rates: £579 per couple for a suite, 12% tax and service charge not incl. Available January 1-April 30, 1997. Saving: over £122.

Inn at Sawmill Farm, Vermont

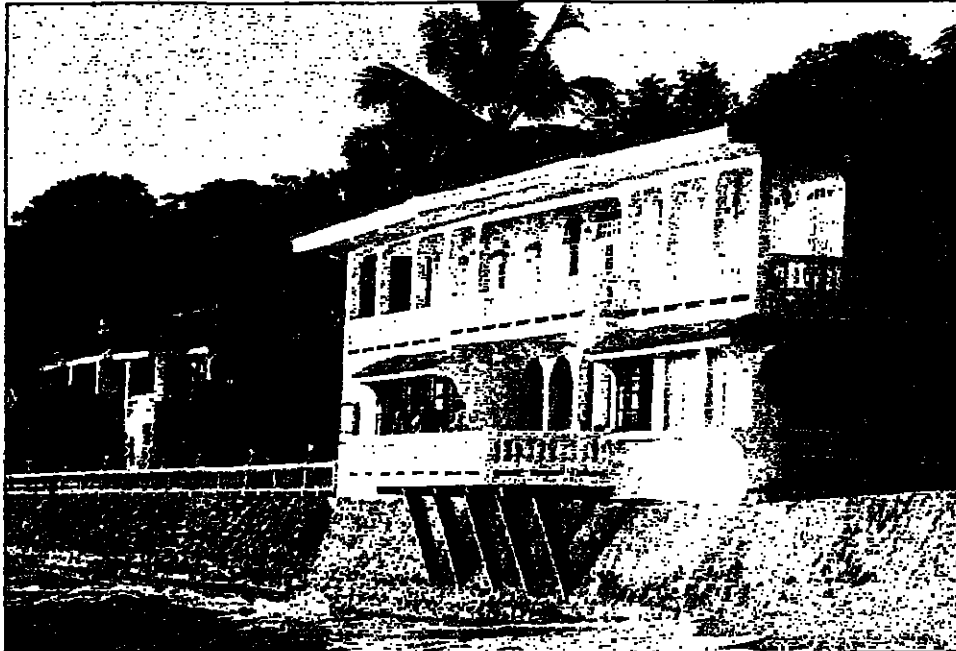
Includes daily ski lift ticket, gourmet dinner and country breakfast. Rates: £103 per person, based on double occupancy for standard category. Not incl 7% tax, 15% service charge. Not weekends. Available Jan 6-March 27, 1997. Saving: 33%.

Langdon Hall, Ontario, Canada

Two-night stay includes dinner for two both nights, welcome gift. Rates: £212 per couple sharing a superior-deluxe double room. Service and 12% tax included. Available until April 30, 1997 except Dec 24, 1996-Feb 9, 1997. Saving: £74.

Meadowood Resort, California

Three-night stay in the Napa Valley includes choice of four of the following: spa treatment, exercise or nutrition consultations, personal training session, golf, tennis or croquet lesson, fitness hike, bike tour, breakfast and wine tutor. Rates: £963 per



The idyllic island hideaway of Horned Dorset Primavera, Puerto Rico

couple Sunday-Thursday, plus tax and service. Available until March 31, 1997, except Dec 31-Jan 3. Saving: £305.

Rancho de San Juan, New Mexico

Four-night minimum stay, Wed-Sat, includes gourmet dinner with wine, body massage and facial, herbal foot bath, guided tours of Indian pueblos and artists' studios. Rates: £854 per person sharing a double room, Available Jan 5-March 30, 1997. Saving: 30%.

Stonepine, Carmel, California

Five-night stay includes dinners, breakfasts, one activity per day, one day's golf fees and horse rental, taxes and gratuities, airport transfers by Rolls Royce. Rates: £1,067 per person sharing a double room,

incl taxes and service. Available until March 23, 1997, except Dec 30-Jan 28, 1997, not Fri & Sat. Saving: 50%.

Triple Creek Ranch, Montana

Six-night stay at a luxurious log or cedar cabin includes gourmet meals, snacks and alcoholic beverages, one day ski pass with transfers, horse riding, cross-country ski equipment, half a day snowmobile. Rates: £2,438 per couple, plus tax and gratuities. Available Jan 3-April 15, 1997. Saving: £274.

Woodlands Resort, South Carolina


One-night package in 42 acres of wooded serenity includes hydrotherapy, massage, herbal wrap, facial and manicure, award-winning five-course dinner with wine, breakfast, home made chocolates, use of bikes, heated pool, tennis courts, croquet lawn. Rates: £610 per couple, plus 5% tax and 18% service charge. Available until March 31, 1997. Saving: £244.

TO MAKE A RESERVATION CALL: 0800 960 239 or FAX 0800 968 152
TO REQUEST A BROCHURE CALL: 0171 287 0987 or FAX 0171 437 0241

CHANGING TIMES

LISTENER CROSSWORD NO 3388

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Cut out and send the completed crossword and coupon above to The Listener Crossword No 3388, 63 Green Lane, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL3 6HE. Entries must be received by Friday, December 27.

The winner will receive The Cambridge Encyclopedia, the most up-to-date and comprehensive one-volume encyclopedia available, with more than 30,000 entries: The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language, a highly illustrated format embracing every aspect of the English language in one volume; and The Cambridge Guide to Literature, covering all the leading writers and movements in literature written in English up to the present. Two runners-up will receive The Cambridge Guide to Literature.



Cambridge University Press, the oldest printing and publishing house in the world, issues about 1,500 new publications in more than 190 countries each year, encompassing virtually every aspect seriously studied in the English-speaking world.



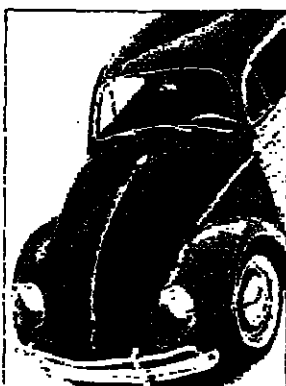
Steering to Christmas gifts for wheel enthusiasts

Page 3



Unbeatable Beetles come back to Britain

Page 5



SATURDAY DECEMBER 14 1996



Renault has fitted storage space into the dashboard which turns the traditional binnacle into a wardrobe; an astonishing 33 litres of space covered by a cantilevered door which opens to leave enough room for a briefcase or sweater

Death of the dashboard

It's gone. Stare through the spokes of the steering wheel in search of comforting dials and digits and there is nothing to see but the black rubber of a coin tray. Outstretch a hand to press and prod buttons for the radio or heater and there is nothing, just the gaping maw of a glovebox the size of a suitcase.

Renault has abolished the dashboard. Before your very eyes, designers of the new Espace have introduced the biggest change since pioneer motorists discovered a circular dial could tell them they were breaking the speed limit. For generations, cars have had dashboards with clock faces and a comforting array of buttons and switches within reach. The traditional layout, which puts the speedometer, rev counter, warning and information lights directly in the driver's eyeline, has been swept away, replaced by a futuristic, information "pod".

The pod, with its flashing lights and rolling digital information, will be alien to millions of motorists used to watching the needle winding round a familiar clockface-style speedo. But this is a car that will be increasingly bought by the Internet generation, reared on computers with flashing screens and coded messages. They will easily grasp the concept.

The pod sits between the driver and passenger, flashing up the speed readout in big, yellow digits along with information such as whether the headlights are on and which radio channel is playing; all displayed so that everyone in the Espace can see it.

Just as well — as the back seat

Renault's MPV revamp rings revolutionary changes by abolishing dials. Kevin Eason sees the fascia of things to come

passengers are as likely to be operating the stereo as the driver. Don't bother to look for the radio in the Espace because it is not there. The dashboard has not a button to press nor a knob to twiddle: the radio is hidden deep in the car's bowels, out of sight and reach, the only control through the driver's stalk and the remote handset.

That gives back-seat drivers their first taste of power. Instead of administering an ear-bashing to the long-suffering driver to change the radio station or choose another track, they can do it themselves. The handset gives them power to switch from radio to compact-disc player, alter bass and treble, similar to changing the television channels at home with the remote, simply beaming their instructions to a sensor in the roof lining. That is the good news for passengers; the bad news is that the driver has a separate set of controls behind the steering wheel with an override so

that the captain of the Starship Espace remains in control.

All other controls — wipers and lights — are on steering wheel stalks; the heater controls located on a tiny binnacle by the A-pillar, a separate control in front of the passenger.

Which leaves a huge expanse waiting to be filled — and it has been, ingeniously, by Renault's design team. They have fitted storage space into the dashboard which turns the traditional glovebox into a wardrobe; an astonishing 33 litres of space covered by a cantilevered door which opens down and out with room for a briefcase, a sweater — even a small child in desperate circumstances.

In fact, the Espace is covered in clever cubby holes with seemingly more drawers and shelves than in the whole of my house: under the seats, in the doors, in the roof — the scope for lost sunglasses, errant handbags, the usual trials of any normal family, will be endless.

Clearly, Renault's designers have given much thought to the Espace's interior in a huge effort to separate the vehicle from the rest of the people-carrying pack.

And they needed to, for the Espace has fallen from grace in the past few years as the market for people-carriers, multi-purpose vehicles — call them what you will — has become congested by the launch of around a dozen new models with two more big players



Renault has not only turned the Espace fascia into a huge glovebox, it has handed control of the radio to the passengers, via a remote handset (inset left). Traditional clocks and dials are lost in the £310 million facelift.

rounded off the face and integrated wing mirrors to make the vehicle sleeker than its competitors.

The vehicle will arrive in Britain with a choice of three engines: a 115 brake horse power 2-litre, a 2.2 turbo-diesel and the range-topping 170bhp 3-litre V6. Around half of sales will be of the diesel version, which is fortunate because it could be the most competent package according to evidence from a 300-mile test drive.

A bit rattly on start-up, the diesel cruises well in a straight line and the digital fuel gauge seemed as though it was stuck, so long did it refuse to budge. The official consumption figures seem a little on the mean side at an average 35 miles to the gallon, but driving with a light right foot obviously brings rewards. Renault claims that improvements mean a 5.10 per cent improvement in fuel economy across the range. The 2-litre was not available for test this week. However, the V6 was — and turned out to be a disappointment. It seemed oddly lethargic and under-

powered though smooth. It comes with automatic transmission only, a new four-speed operated through a stalk which pokes out from behind the steering wheel and was notchy and difficult to use, though Renault promises improvements before the vehicle reaches Britain.

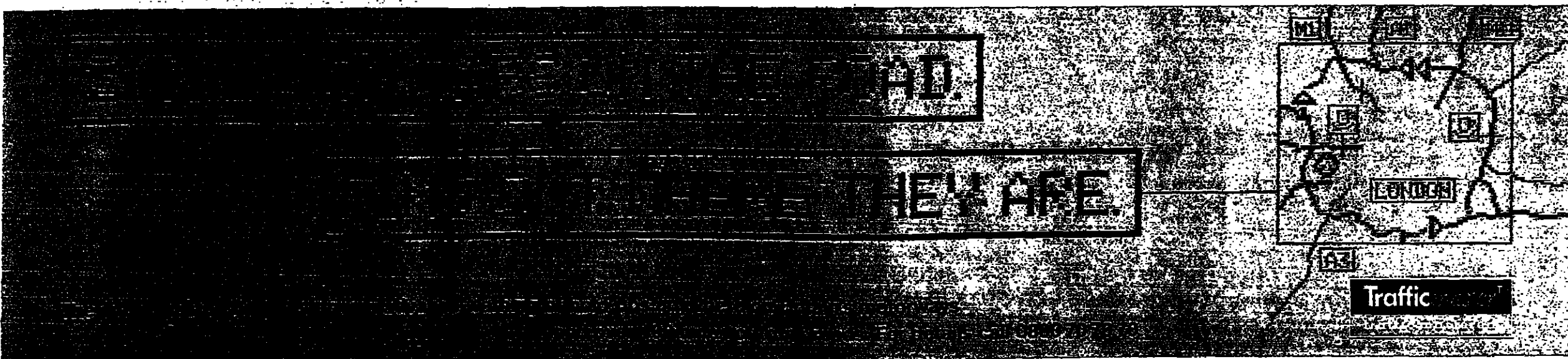
The turning circle is tight, just 10.6 metres between kerbs, which is handy for using the vehicle in town, and the ride is pleasantly comfortable — as I can confirm after a punishing two days in the Espace over a long, long distance.

However, the quality of the drive will be subsumed by admiration for the interior among most buyers. Renault has introduced floor rails for easier movement of new, lighter seats. Renault claims owners will be able to indulge their fetish for furniture movement with a possible, if somewhat astonishing, 352 combinations of seat position. Now that could keep the kids amused on a wet Sunday afternoon when the picnic has just been called off.

While nobody but a maniac will want to test the theory, it does at least underline Renault's determination that the Espace brings something new to a segment in which buyers have more choice than ever before.

With prices between £18,000 and £27,000, the French seem content to give up sales leadership in exchange for leadership in engineering and design. By and large, they have succeeded with attention to detail and innovation... except for the string.

They haven't included a length of string, potentially the single most important accessory Renault will need to stock. You see, they forgot what happens at home when the kids use the remote for the telly: it gets lost for a fortnight, stuffed deep down the back of a cushion, kicked under the sofa or tumbled inadvertently into a sweater. So when the nation's children are let loose on the Espace radio handset from their back seats, the only way ever to guarantee you can find it each trip is to attach the remote to a piece of string nailed to the dashboard. Note to Renault: no charge for that piece of design advice.



Available from: Dixons, Currys, The Link, Tandy, John Lewis Partnership, Halfords, Ryans, Telford, Maplins, House of Fraser, selected Comet and Alders Stores, Westford Electronics, Motorworld, Charlie Browns, Al Motor Stores, Welcome Break outlets and other leading high street electrical retailers.

While the Christmas drink-drive campaign is failing to hit its core target, another dangerous group of muzzy-headed motorists is being left alone

What about the drug-drivers?

The Christmas spirit was notably absent in north Devon this week when a brewery lorry overturned and left the injured driver hanging upside down in his cab. Naturally, other motorists rushed to the scene. They loaded their cars with booze and left.

Let's you become too despondent at this example of greed overcoming compassion. I should point out that news can be defined as something happening today that did not happen yesterday and which is unlikely to happen tomorrow. And someone must have done the right thing, or the driver — happily only slightly injured — would still be hanging there.

It seems a safe bet that people who can ignore someone in trouble in favour of stocking up with drink will not be taking much notice of

DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION



Peter Barnard

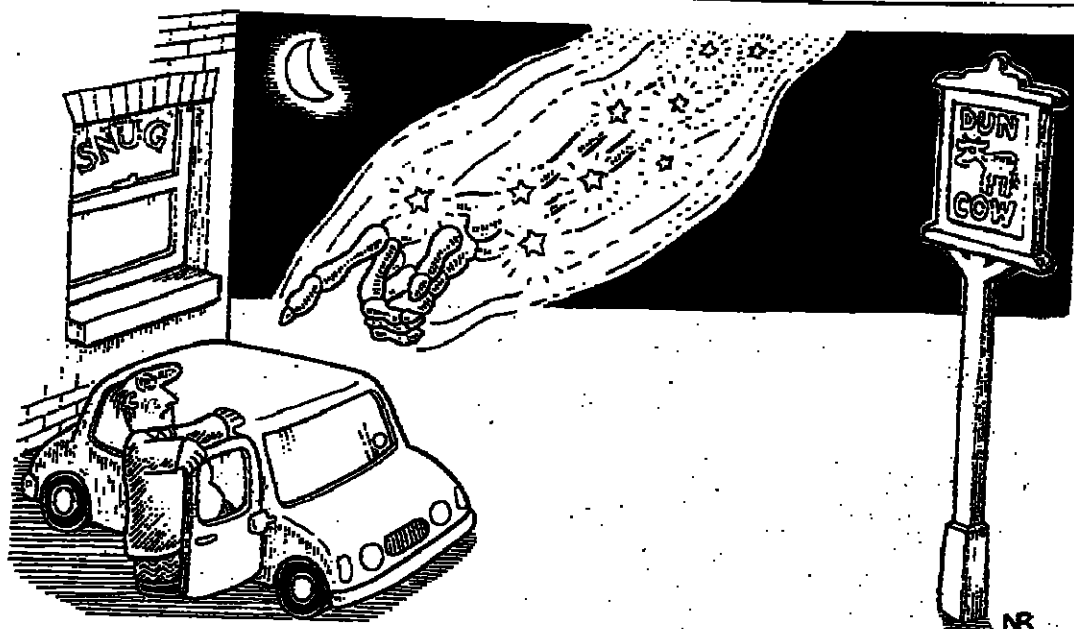
the seasonal drink-drive campaign, so we can expect the usual madness, although our attitude towards drink-driving has improved enormously over the years.

Several police forces are running campaigns this Christmas aimed at the hard core of drivers who still

drink too much. Indeed the one weakness of the otherwise powerful television drink-drive video is that, once again, it features a young victim whereas it is the middle-aged who need the shock treatment. Young people I know, including my daughters and their friends, do not drink at all when they are driving, whereas I regard a pint of beer or a couple of glasses of wine as being "safe".

This is mere self-delusion of course. When, sorry, if Labour wins the next election it plans to reduce the allowable alcohol level in blood and I believe that within a few years that level will be down to zero: at least then we shall all know where we stand.

But the curtailment of alcohol as a driving risk will not be the end of the threat from drugs. Research by Strathclyde University has shown



that drugs other than alcohol may have been a factor in 20 per cent of accidents. The legislation includes the phrase "while under the influence of drink or drugs" and the problem is by no means confined to illicit material.

There is evidence that women are particularly vulnerable, as they tend to take more tranquillisers

and anti-depressants than do men (you cannot imagine why? Nor me). But the notion that alcohol is the only legal drug that affects driving is so entrenched that people often ignore the dangers of other drugs, even though GPs usually warn patients about the risk and the labels should carry a warning.

In Sweden, police officers are trained to gaze into people's eyes to see the signs of drug use. This sounds like too intimate a procedure for the British, so we shall have to think of something else. Random testing is part of the answer. To hell with civil liberties: random tests are far better, and a lot more honest, than the police

having too cook up stories about spotting erratic driving or flickering rear lights.

Poor air quality, fog, frost, drizzle, dark afternoons. This week's weather in most of the country has made driving difficult enough without the related fact that mucky conditions lead to mucky road signs. Local authorities are mostly on the ball when road surfaces get icy, but why aren't they doing anything about other hazards?

Direction signs and bollards in the middle of the road are the main problem. Many direction signs are so covered in grime they are unreadable, increasing the chances of rear-end shunts as drivers peer through the gloom trying to decode information.

Bollards, notionally edged in white or yellow to make them visible, are now edged in soot black or battleship grey, thus making them all but invisible. Even obstructions which carry reflectors become lethal rather than useful as grime obscures the plastic lenses.

Perhaps the oddballs offering to clean our windcreens could be hired to turn their charms in a different direction.

Back to school for drinkers

ADRIAN SHEPHERD



Magistrates want to extend the probation service's rehabilitation course across the country. But convicted drink-driver John Bailey thinks the classes are unnecessarily long

ON COURSE

■ DRINK-drive road deaths have reduced dramatically, though last year there were still 580 fatalities. Twenty per cent of drivers or motorcyclists killed in 1995 were found to be over the limit.

■ THE rehabilitation experiment has been extended for two years and will spread around the country, allowing magistrates to refer more drink-drivers to classes.

■ DRIVERS who complete the course can apply to have their period of disqualification cut by up to 25 per cent. In Medway and Maidstone the fee a participant is required to pay is dictated by the magistrates. It can vary from £60 to £200.

John Bailey's second pint was a mistake that he was to rue for a long time. His story is a lesson to drivers who need to know that one drink too far, no matter how small and seemingly insignificant, can lead to anguish, embarrassment and even the loss of their jobs.

Although Government campaigns centre around the death and destruction of drink-driving, Bailey's story will probably strike as much terror into the hearts of motorists whose offence is more blunder than crime but who are tarnished in the same way as offenders who kill and maim when many times over the limit.

For one indiscretion, Bailey, a respectable businessman, was labelled a criminal and had to go through rehabilitation to try to win his licence back. Bailey, who is 34, married with a child, is a manager with a healthcare company who plays a mean game of squash. After a fast game one evening, he relaxed with a pint of lager with his chums at his

James Luckhurst asks if a class that helps convicted drink-drivers get back on the road is either education or punishment

sports club in South London. The blandishment to have "just one more" was to cost him his licence.

On his way home, he ran into a roadside checkpoint set up by the police. He was breath tested and gave a positive result.

"It was the start of a nightmare, and the process of being arrested scared the pants off me," says Bailey. At the police station, he gave two breath tests, each showing 47 micrograms of alcohol, only 12 micrograms — tiny beads of breath — over the police limit, but the difference between being officially sober and officially drunk. Even the police seemed sympathetic over his predicament.

"The police officers were courteous to the point where

the woman police officer who arrested me actually dropped me at home when the paperwork had been completed."

It took two months for Bailey to be charged. After being stopped in May, he did not appear in court until September, a "ridiculously long time", he says.

"It seems that if you're well over the limit, they deal with you pretty quickly but it was a very long three months for me, during which time I had no idea whether I would keep my job or not." The court appearance, which resulted in a year's ban and £250 fine, was no less scary.

There was, however, a lifeline he didn't expect. On the way out of the court, the clerk handed him a leaflet with details of a rehabilitation

course. It meant paying £200, but Bailey would be eligible to have his licence back three months early.

Magistrates agreed to refer him to the Kent Probation Service, which runs schemes in the Medway and Maidstone areas. The success of the course means magistrates want it extended across the country, says Dick Whitfield, Kent's chief probation officer.

He adds: "Statistics from the Transport Research Laboratory prove that the scheme works and this is backed up by the minimal reconviction rate we have encountered in Kent."

"Paying up to £200 to attend a two-and-a-half-hour group session every week for eight weeks could seem to be further punishment. But the fact is that convicted drink-drivers only attend if they want to. The courts might offer the scheme but they're not obliged to take it. It's an excellent scheme that really works. Since we launched it three years ago, we have had 418 candidates successfully complete the course with just two of these re-offending."

Bailey believes the course was a punishment. "It is a big commitment, not only for me, but for everyone involved in giving me life each week. I've learned a lot but I've also felt we could cover the issues thoroughly in a shorter time. For example, every participant has to keep a daily drink diary. We compare notes at the beginning of each session. In the early stages it was useful, but there's a limit to how surprised you can be when your diary reveals a large intake on a Friday night."

Bailey was lucky: he kept his

job and will get his company car back. Although for many convicted drink drivers, the task of getting insurance becomes a nightmare when they return to the road, unable to get quotes at all from the stricter companies while others demand huge premiums. A rehabilitation course could mean discounts of 35 to 50 per cent from brokers or insurers co-operating with the venture.

However, Bailey is sobered and embittered by the experience, like thousands more. He adds: "I suppose it's easy to be wise after the event but sometimes I object to the stigma that's attached to a drink-drive conviction."

"I sit in the passenger seat of my wife's or a friend's car and watch one driver after another doing absolutely stupid things on the motorway. Nose-to-tail at 90 miles an hour, sudden changes of lane and last-minute overtaking. I can't help but feel that these drivers need some sort of rehabilitation scheme as well."

See letters, p19

THE LIMIT

■ DRIVERS who fail a roadside breath test take a more accurate breath test at the station.

■ The limit is 35 micrograms of alcohol per 100ml of breath.

■ Then a blood test will be asked for: the legal limit is 80 milligrammes of alcohol per 100ml of blood.

ROAD GUIDE

● LONDON

A406 East Finchley single lane on the North Circular Road between Henley's Corner and Finchley High Road.

A406 Upper Edmonton; major roadworks over the Lea Valley Viaduct.

A3 Kingston; northbound lane closure.

A302 Westminster; work on Victoria street at the junction with Great Smith Street and Broad Sanctuary.

A217 Wandsworth; roadworks on south side of Wandsworth Bridge.

A4 Hammersmith; roadworks off-peak.

● SOUTH EAST

A4 Reading; restrictions and lane closures between the Hogarth Roundabout and Burnfield Road.

A329M Reading; one lane closed in both directions over the M4 at junction 10.

A27 Brighton; overnight work between the Hangleton Junction and Ditchling Road Bridge. Diversions.

M25 Junctions 25-26; work both ways with narrow lanes and 50mph limit.

M27 Junctions 8-10; contraflow.

M25 Junctions 6-10; lane closures both ways: A3 Hogs Back (A31), works at the Stag Hill flyover.

● SOUTH WEST

A390 Treliske Roundabout; contraflow.

A39 Visicks Corner; roadworks.

M5 Junction 13; only one lane open at the roundabout junction with the A419.

M5 Junction 17; roadworks for construction of a new road layout on the junction roundabout. Diversions, but usually severe delays.

M5 Junctions 17-20; contraflow across the Avonmouth Bridge with a 50mph speed limit.

M4 Junctions 17-18; contraflow and 50mph limit.

● NORTH

M6 Junctions 20-21; down to three narrow lanes.

M6 Junctions 37-38; contraflow with two lanes in both directions and a 50 mph limit.

A82 Chadderton; work on Oldham Road at the junction with Hollinwood Ave.

A59 Much Hoole; work on Liverpool Road; major delays.

A19 Bentley work at the Bentley Road flood arches.

A61 Stourton; lane restrictions on Waterfield Road.

M1 Junction 47; major roadworks, continue around the Leeds Express delays on the M1, M621 and Dewsbury Road.

● MIDLANDS AND EAST

ANGIA

A6 Lockington; contraflow from just north of the M1 J24 to

Sawley Island (B6540) with no right turn into Donnington Lane.

A52 Near Grantham; temporary lights and single lane traffic over the Nottingham Road bridge. Diversions via the B1174 and A607.

A464 Haughton; temporary lights at Haughton Crossroads, between Upton Magna and Asterley.

A500 Talke-Stoke on Trent; contraflow on the D-Road between Talke and Stoke on Trent as roadworks continue.

A14 Newmarket Bypass; works and contraflow.

A41 Wolverhampton; temporary traffic lights on Bilston Road at the Canal Bridge for strengthening works between Eagle Street & Chillingham Street. Expect peak-time delays.

● WALES

A482 Aberystwyth; Upper Aberystwyth Bridge on South Road closed for reconstruction work. Diversions via Panteg Road and the A487, where there are also temporary traffic lights.

M48; Junctions 1-2; carriageway reduced to one lane over the old Severn Bridge for roadworks.

A470 north of Cefn Coed; temporary lights on Brecon Road for major works; 40mph on A465 at Cefn Coed with tempo lights on Aberdare Road.

M4 Junctions 23a-24; lane closures between the Magor and Newport junction as major widening work continues. Expect regular rush hour delays.

A4067 between Ynysforgan (M4 Junction 45) and Llanidloes; contraflow with a single lane for construction work. Expect delays.

A472 Pontypool; contraflow between Pontypool and the Heron Roundabout. Expect lengthy delays, especially from the A4042 direction.

● SCOTLAND

A90; contraflow from the Bridge of Monodines to Fiddes. Carriageway reduced to one lane in both directions.

A8 Junction 2 Newbridge Spur (M9); major roadworks, with lane closures on the roundabout.

A8 Princes Street; closed to vehicles Eastbound. Diversions via South Charlotte Street, Queen Street and York Place.

A90 between Swallow Roundabout and Longforgan; carriageway reduced to one lane in both directions.

A898 Erskine Bridge nly open to car and light vehicles.

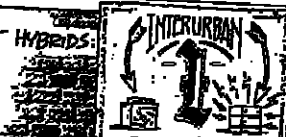
A76 Lochhill; temporary traffic lights in place.



Highways Agency InfoLine 0345 3043030

AUTOFAX by David Long and Les Evans

THERE'S NOTHING NEW ABOUT HYBRIDS. THE 1905 INTERURBAN HAD INTERCHANGEABLE PETROL AND ELECTRIC MOTORS.



ERIC FERNHOUGH, THE LAST ENGLISHMAN TO HOLD THE MOTORCYCLE WORLD SPEED RECORD, DIED ON ST. GEORGE'S DAY, 1938.



IN 1933 THE ARCHITECT AND ENGINEERING VISIONARY BENJAMIN FRANKLIN BUILT A SAFETY CAR CALLED THE DYNAMICON, BUT UNFORTUNATELY IT CRASHED KILLING ITS PASSENGERS.



THE 1906 ZUNDAPP JUNK WAS NAMED AFTER THE TWO-FACED ROMAN GOD BECAUSE ITS BACK SEAT LOOKED REARWARDS.



PAIR

W

I

Fancy festive car gear



Sens-O-Lock

How a class Chi

Kevin East you borrow

Ken Tomlin back the key Aston and what he really was: Christmas: a Ferrari Carrera? Nope. What gorgeous, long-sleeved Austin Healey 3000? The choice was envied the investment bank belongs to an exclusi whose members has than two dozen glori at their disposal any want to take them for They have everything E-type to a tiny 600 Abarth in bright ye staid but sure 1967 Plus Princess saloon wonderful open-top Ford Thunderbird with front seat and rear fire They are cars even o motorists drool over b they can never own i

ONE OR A PRESSIE FOR YOURSELF: MOTORING GIFT IDEAS

Wide outfit with matching accessories

From fake brakes to carbon cockpit covers, Xtreme has it all. Guy Walters ventures in to the Essex mecca of car spoiling

I had to be in Essex. Or, more precisely, it had to be in Harlow. There could be no other town in no other county that could host a place such as Xtreme. In a place where low profile tyres will raise your profile and where young men are judged by the width of their wheels, a shop specialising in state-of-the-art car accessories just had to open.

The merchandise on offer in Xtreme (slogan: "Why be anything else?") is staggering, both in terms of range and attractiveness. If you are worried that your calipers don't match your bodywork, then you can buy the matching paint for £18.80. You can also buy a gaiter for your gearstick that matches those newly-painted calipers. White speedometer dials can be bought for around £40 to give your motor that rally-car feel, essential for the rugged streets of Chelmsford.

Then there are the Momo racing harness pads at £11.75 that will rein in the Damon Hill in you. But let's not forget that "carbon fibre" cockpit film at £19.97 per roll you can spread over your dashboard to give your XR2 that, er, carbon look and the sheets of plastic starting at

£14.10 per roll that can tint your windows so the world looks permanently twilight. (This is also useful for flightless vampires and ugly boy-racers.) It is scarcely worth mentioning the alloy wheels at £250 each, those important low-profile tubes of rubber, car alarms with voices — "Take another step closer and I'll go off" — and sound-systems loud enough to open your boot and shake your fluffy dice (dice sadly not available).

Volkswagen Golfs are well catered for at Xtreme. Your Mark II Golf can be fitted with a delectable Hamei grill spoiler for £52.88 and a handy OMP strut brace to firm up your underpinnings for £52.23. What better Christmas presents could a car wish for? You could also buy it a Janspeed Large Bore (indeed) exhaust system for £206.80, which will add tons of volume if not horsepower, and a K&N Performance air filter for £28.70, which is presumably essential in most parts of Essex.

Those who can't stretch to buying actual disc brakes could buy some Follatec DTM drum-brake covers at £39.50 to give that "crossdrilled disc" look. This is, of course, only

necessary if you've bought some alloy wheels, otherwise nobody will be able to admire them. And if your motor doesn't deserve a whole new exhaust system, then buy it a straight four-inch exhaust tail (with rolled lip, very important) for £22.91. At the very least it would make an ideal stocking filler.

In fact, it is nearly possible to make an entire car out of the accessories available. It would look fantastic and cost several thousand pounds, all it would lack is an engine and the occasional door — but those are for squares, not the dress.

Xtreme is the offspring of a union between Joe Martorana and Keith Ripp. Martorana was the owner of the Mr Unique chain of fast-fit tyre and exhaust centres, and Ripp the owner of Ripspeed, a chain of car accessory shops. It was love at first sight and Xtreme is a hybrid of both their specialties. What makes Xtreme really special is that you can have your exciting new toys fitted on-site. Thus, no having to drive away with your new 20-inch alloys in the boot.

Ripp sells the place well with his banter. "Look at this place, just look



Xtreme co-owner Keith Ripp, king of the bolt-on goodie: "All these things are essentially luxury items. None of them is essential."

at it," he says. "You know what it's got? Um, what? It looks like a smart industrial estate. 'Charisma. A lot of charisma.' Is that it? 'We've also got a coffee bar. Joe is Italian, so we've got Lavazza coffee. The best. And these aluminium chairs are Italian too. The best.' Xtreme even has a play area for children, and a clinical-looking garage with £30,000 scissor lifts — 'the best'. Even the mechanics wear Formula One overalls — 'it's

all about projecting the right image. It looks professional.' The best, no doubt.

In the shop, which is a pleasant enough environment — the hybrid offspring of a night of passion between Top Man and Top Gear — there is a huge bank of TV screens pumping out MTV. The music is Carnaby Street boutique loud and young men walk around wondering whether to buy the white dials or the caliper paint, or, what the

hell, both. The car park can handle over 60 XR3s, and Ripp says that on weekends it resembles a get-together in which owners compare wheel sizes and how loud it can get.

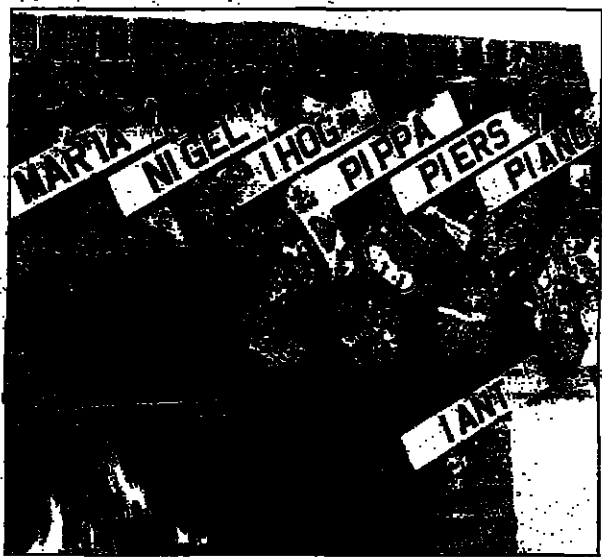
But Ripp is no fool. He and Martorana have invested £500,000 in Xtreme, and judging by Essex's taste in automotive modification, they should get their money back quicker than a Cosworth. But it is not just les hommes d'Essex. In the few weeks that the shop has been

open, people have come from as far as Bournemouth to make their cars lower, wider, and louder. "All these things are essentially luxury items," says Ripp. "None of them is essential." But boys love toys, and none more so than wide ones.

● Xtreme, Crown Gate, Velizy Ave, Harlow, Essex. Telephone 01279 412603 for information and details of the shop's mail-order service.

Fancy festive car gear?

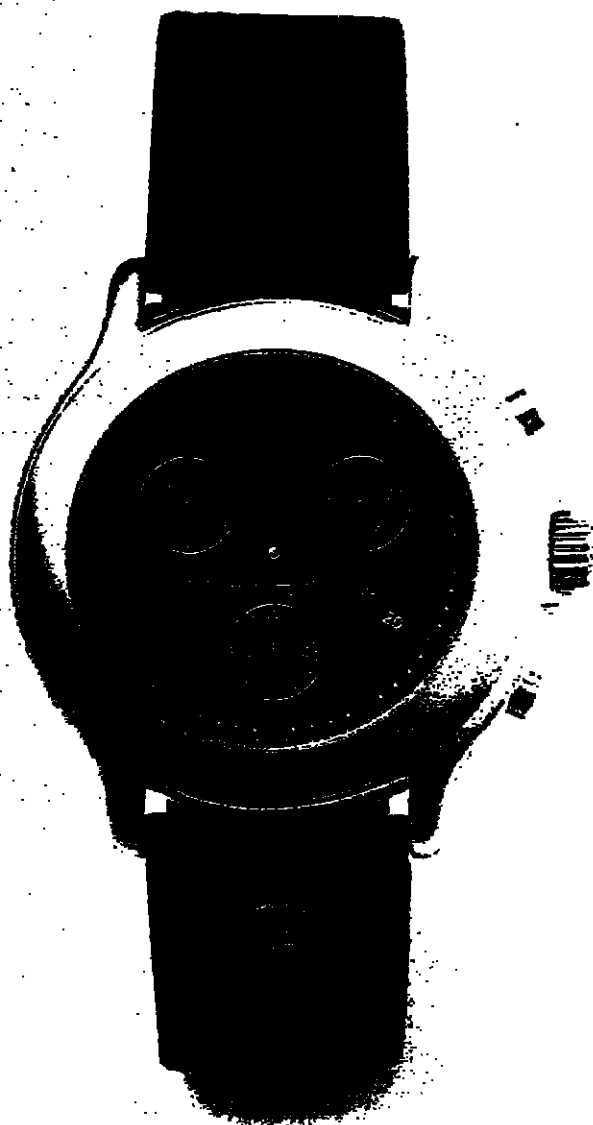
TEN DAYS to go and you haven't a clue what to buy your partner, father, mother, brother, son, daughter or assorted acquaintances for Christmas. Before you tear your hair out and declare Christmas cancelled, check out the stories at the top and bottom of this page and our half-dozen gift ideas. There might be something here to ease the burden, if not the wallet, and put a seasonal smile on a motorist's face. Happy shopping.



Personal number plates from £250: DVLA, 0181-200-6565



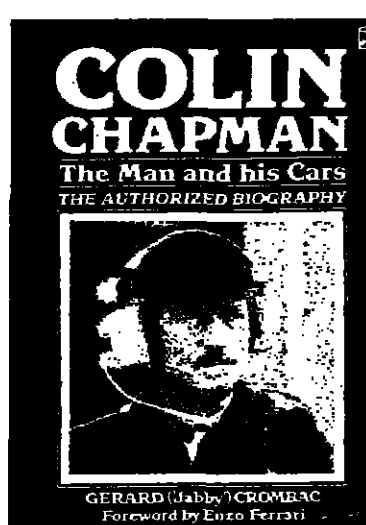
Sens-O-Lock alcohol detector, £350, stops the car if you're over. From ASE, 01494 794300



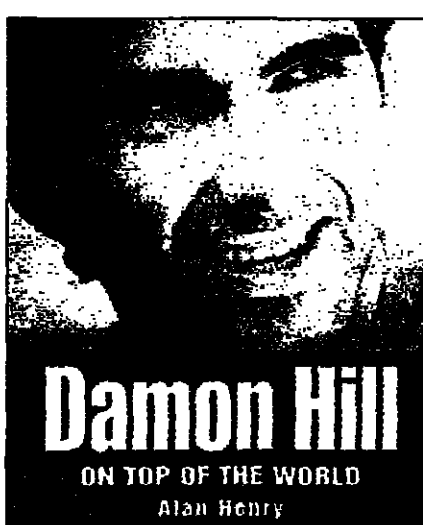
BMW Z3 watch, £350 at BMW dealers (car, £27,000)



Fun car balls (no comment), £3; braces £40; silk tie £35; bow tie £20. At BMW dealers



Damon's year (£12.99) and Colin Chapman's biography (£19.99), at good bookshops



How to get a classic for Christmas

Kevin Eason on the club that lets you borrow rare and precious cars

Ken Tomlin handed back the keys of the Aston and pondered what he really wanted for Christmas: a Ferrari? A 911 Carrera? Nope. What about a gorgeous, long-scooted classic Austin Healey 3000?

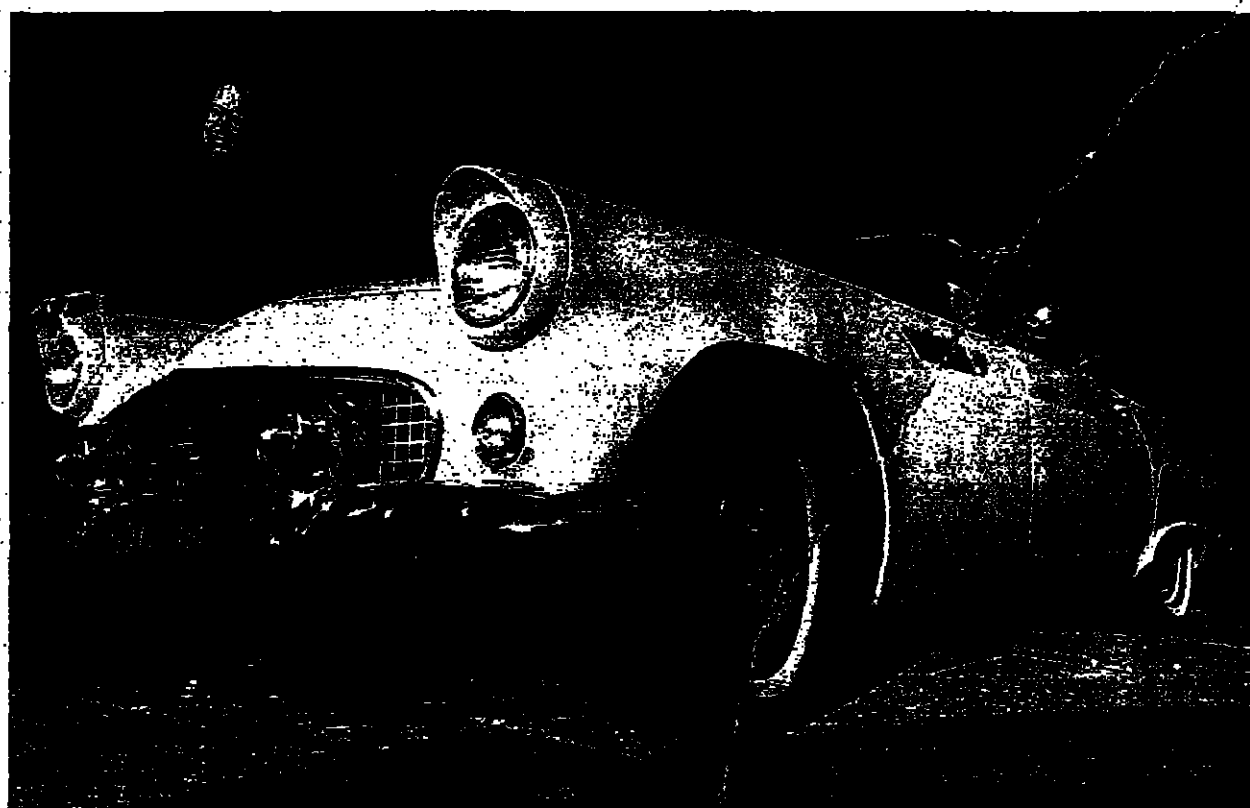
The choice was enviable for the investment banker. He belongs to an exclusive club whose members have more than two dozen glorious cars at their disposal any time they want to take them for a spin. They have everything from an E-type to a tiny 600cc Fiat Abarth in bright yellow, a staid but sure 1967 Vanden Plas Princess saloon to a wonderful open-topped 1955 Ford Thunderbird with bench front seat and rear fins.

They are cars even ordinary motorists drool over but know they can never own because

the cost of buying one is prohibitive: the cost of running one often enough to reduce grown men to tears.

David Kavanagh found a way for drivers to do more than dream. A London barrister, he spent most of his early adult life looking at cars he wanted desperately to drive but could never afford. "I had minor classics like MGs, Triumphs and Alfasuds," he says. "But a poplar barrister doesn't earn much and the chance of driving a Ferrari or a Porsche was miles out of my reach."

But maybe a collective could own cars of their dreams. David worked on the idea and came up with the Classic Car Club, a unique scheme which allows enthusiasts to drive a huge range of exotic cars without the commitment to buy. They pay a one-off joining



David Kavanagh with Thunderbird: "You can't just get in and drive off. Some of these cars are difficult to handle."

fee of £500 plus £1,500-a-year to buy credits, which they cash against whichever car they want for however long they want it.

They simply book the car they want from the catalogue, turn up at the Kings Cross garage in north London and

set off. For some, it is the chance to swap the company Mondeo for something more exotic, for others — particularly people based in central London who do not drive during the week — it is a way to have an exotic car without actually owning one.

The club also aims to be more than a hire service: there are track days, club outings and a library of motoring books and videos. Or members can simply pay their money and make their choice of car, their only other commitment to put petrol in it.

There are more than 150 members, including Ken Tomlin, who is typical of the type of people who relish the chance to spend a weekend with a car they might not be sure they really want to buy. Ken says: "I had thought for a long time about buying a

classic car of some kind. I had my eye on a Ferrari but they can cost around £3,000 a year to run and insure and that is before anything mechanical goes wrong. I heard about the club and discovered it is not only a great way to check which sort of car I would want to own, but also a way to drive cars I would never have the chance to otherwise."

David adds: "People who own classics know that £1,500 can sometimes pay for just one service. The advantage of a club like this is that you are not stuck with a car you don't like. You just change it for something else next time when you fancy an outing."

Members choose for practicality as well as fun. The club's Porsche 928 and 1986 Jaguar XJS are favoured long-distance cruisers, for example; the 1953 C-type, a replica of the famous 1950s racing Jaguars, is chosen for a weekend when fantasy can become reality.

David spends weekends at auctions hunting out the next acquisition, trying to judge what kind of car will be most popular with club members, whose number is starting to grow to the extent that he is considering opening a second branch in the north of England.

However, members not only have to have the money but the right motoring stuff too: no drink-drive or reckless driving convictions allowed and no more than two speeding con-

victions in the past five years. Members are also expected to go through some tuition before they are allowed out in cars — like the 140mph 1979 Renault Alpine A310 V6 or the hugely powerful 1975 Aston Martin V8 from 1975 which can sometimes bite.

Says David, "It is not just a question of ordering the car, turning up and driving away. Some of these cars are difficult to handle so we want to be sure that before members go out, they are certain they know what they are doing."

How much driving a member gets depends on their choice and how they spend their annual 750 points. Soft-tops cost more points in summer, for instance, while some cars demand more points because they are more expensive: so, an Alfa Spider in summer demands 96 points, an E-type in winter just 20.

David says: "Members who use their points wisely should get about 50 days' use of the cars in a year."

Then members like Ken Tomlin can drive what they want, when they want — an idea that appeals. Ken says: "It is a very clever idea, and not just for enthusiasts — because of the wide range of cars. The only problem is deciding which car to have next."

The Classic Car Club, telephone 0171-713-7313.

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
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shops gate

It's the car that refuses to go away. Kevin Eason reports on how a South London firm is helping customers to buy again that paragon of plain old fashioned simplicity

Beetle's comeback: via Mexico



OLD BEETLES never die, they just go halfway round the world and back to start their sixth decade on our roads. The Volkswagen Beetle is the car that refuses to go away. Carmakers can invent the latest whizzbang, aerodynamic new models with enough gadgets to stick on the dashboard of Concorde, but the hands of drivers just want the plain, old-fashioned simplicity of the pug-faced little car first seen before the Second World War.

Now father-and-son team Oily and Shaun Hollamby are selling Beetles again — and they are brand, spanking new.

They come to Britain at a base price of £7,495, cheaper than a Mini, and the Hollambys, who run Volkspares in Sydenham, London, believe they can sell at least 400 next year, such is the demand from customers wanting a distinctive but reliable car in a world of motoring lookalikes.

Shaun says: "We have sold spares for many years and recently been getting components direct from the factory in Mexico. People kept asking if we could get cars, so we decided to try it — and we have been surprised at the interest."

Customers who wanted a Beetle have had to buy second-hand and some of the cars are getting on a bit now. This way, they can have their Beetle but get a reliable, modern car which is simple but fun.

Although VW abandoned production of the Beetle in Europe 17 years ago, the company still makes the ubiquitous little car in Mexico. Not much has been changed, though the modern Beetle has posh colour-keyed bumpers instead of the original chrome features, a proper dashboard, and even reclining seats.

The layout under the bonnet — or boot, whichever way you look at it — is much the same. Fuel injection and some improvements make the air-cooled 1.6 a little perkier, offering an extra ten horse power over the old European power packs, but the four-speed manual box is familiar. Top speed with a level road and a fair wind is a cheerfully optimistic 95mph.

The car is a remarkable story of survival in a world of rapid change, fashion and fads. Ferdinand Porsche designed the *Volkswagen* (people's car) on the orders of Adolf Hitler, who wanted a car which would put Germany on his ambitious and vast motorway network.

War delayed production and, ironically, it was band of British officers who restarted the factory in 1945 as an idea to give work to Germans, battered by defeat and desperate for work and a return to normality. Nobody then could have had the remotest idea that the cars — quite

different to anything else on the market, with their curious rear-slung, air-cooled engines and body shape reminiscent of a beetle shell — would become the best-sellers ever. VW made more than 21 million in Europe before ending production to make way for the

modern, compact Golf. But the market for cheap, simple cars was growing fast in South America and the Beetle assembly lines were moved to Mexico where they have thrived.

That has kept the door open for British buyers, who range from enthusiasts to motorists who recognise the Beetle as the same safe, reliable yet quirky transport it always was. They are potentially fashionable again, with the Hollambys planning to import cabriolets as well as a new version with an electric rag-top.

"They will never die in popularity. They look distinctive and are cute and practical," says Shaun. "The Beetle is unique and that is why people love them."

Shaun Hollamby, left, of Volkspares: "People kept asking if we could get cars so we decided to try it, and we have been surprised at the interest." At least 400 cars are to be imported next year from Mexico.

The vee-dub legend began when Dr Porsche designed and built a surprise present for his cherished son, reports Ian Morton

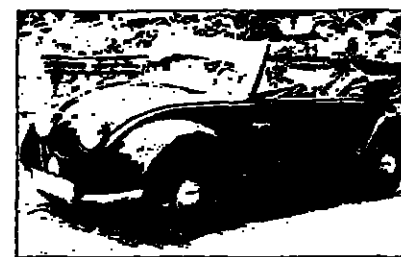
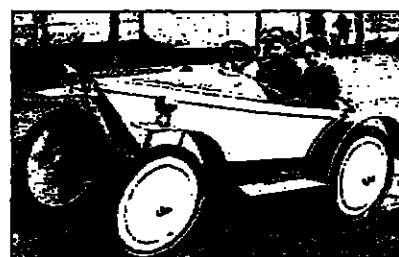
It started as a toy

IT WAS THE Christmas present every boy dreams of: a Porsche. Except that this tiny Porsche was made by the great pioneer himself — for his son.

It was 1920, and little Ferdinand Anton Ernst Porsche, 11-year-old son of automotive designer Dr Ferdinand Porsche, had been promised nothing more dashing than a goat-cart for Christmas. Secretly, however, his father had been building a boy-sized two-seater powered by a 3.5 horse power air-cooled, two-cylinder four-stroke, rear engine, and when Christmas morning broke, there it was parked

alongside the decorated tree. The following day, the car was carried outside and the engine started. "Much to my father's astonishment I drove off immediately in my new car — he certainly hadn't reckoned on that."

Ferry recalls in his autobiography: "My car was not registered and therefore had no number plate, but I drove it not only round the factory but also in Weiner-Neustadt. Policemen used to turn away whenever I went past." While Dad was indulging his 11 year-old son and heir, there was an important underlying



purpose to the exercise. Porsche's ambition was to design and build a small car accessible to a wide range of the population and he had already investigated which layout would work best, as demonstrated by Ferry's little car.

Austro-Daimler, Porsche's employer,

allowed the building of a small competition car, the 1.5-litre Sascha of 1922, which came sixth in its class in the Targa Florio road race in Sicily, driven by Alfred Neubauer. But it was the mid-30s before Porsche's dream of a small car for the multitudes finally took the shape which

Ferdinand Porsche junior with the Christmas present that started it all, far left, and with the prototype

we know as the VW Beetle, destined to be the biggest-selling and longest-running model ever, and arguably the car of the century. It had an air-cooled engine driving the rear wheels — like little Ferry's original.

Neubauer claimed that the Sascha racer had been the forerunner of the Volkswagen. But Ferry Porsche — one of whose tasks at the founding of the original VW factory at Wolfsburg in 1938 was to drive Adolf Hitler to the station in a prototype open version of his father's small car — knew that the story had really started at Christmas in 1920.

AC turns on again

AC Cars, the British carmaker with the longest record of continuous production, was this week rescued from extinction. The company went into receivership earlier this year with debts of about £1 million. Now AC has been bought by the American-registered firm, Pride Automotive Group, best known here for its car leasing business. Alan Lubinsky, Pride president, says: "AC is one of the best-known marques among the world's sports cars. We are in full production of the Cobra Mark IV and will be growing the AC presence in the buoyant market for distinctive, high-performance cars."

First task for the new owners will be to revive the most recent incarnation of the AC

One of our oldest carmakers is set to muscle back, Vaughan Freeman says

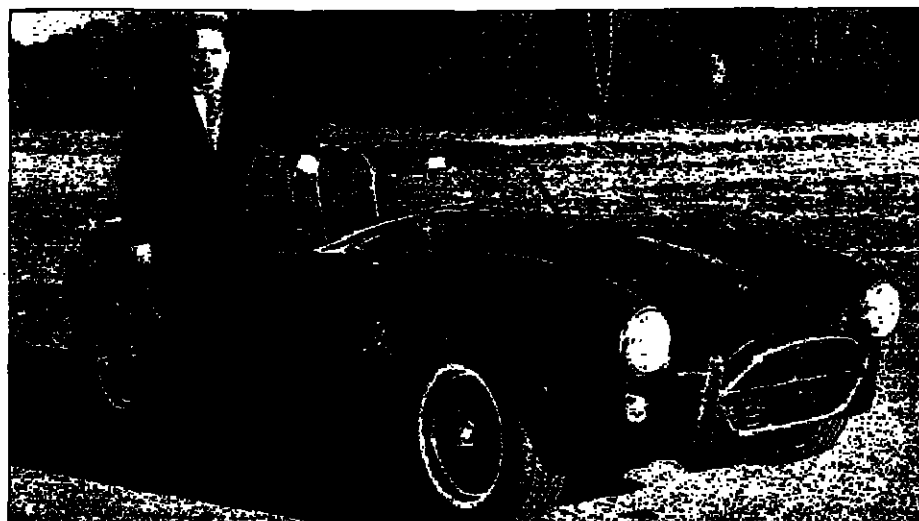


New boss Alan Lubinsky with the famous Cobra, a big seller in America

Ace, which was launched last year but shelved when the company went into receivership. Pride will relaunch the Ace next year.

What makes AC cars special is their phenomenal performance, matched to classic bespoke English automotive tailoring. The two-seater, open-topped Cobra is a

145mph five-litre V8 capable of hitting 60mph in less than five seconds. The £73,000 hand-built car uses a tubular steel "ladder" spaceframe construction, with aluminium bodywork. Yet the hairy-chested



sportscar approach is paired to such cossetting comforts as deep-pile wool carpeting, and the finest English leather for the seats, fascia and door panels.

The more relaxed and less

brutal-looking Ace uses the same V8 but performance is tuned to a 0-60mph time of around six seconds.

AC builds around 70 Cobras a year, most of which go straight to America where they

are a motoring legend. The car evolved in the early 1960s when American racer Carroll Shelby came up with the idea of fitting Ford V8 engines into AC cars.

The Pride group hopes to

build as many as 100 Cobras next year, ultimately raising production to between 200 and 300 cars a year. Martin Hayes, AC's spokesman, says: "The first phase now will be an active search for distributors worldwide, particularly in the UK, Germany, the USA and Australia."

"We believe that there is a buoyant market for sportscars generally, and particularly for a handbuilt British sportscar with a metal body that has a great and historic name. There is a worldwide following for the AC name, and we believe we have the right product, the right price and the right quality."

"The Cobra is a blatant power machine, and that is the image that it trades on. The Ace is very much a roadgoing machine that can be compared with the Mercedes-Benz SL in terms of likely purchasers."

AC started when John Weller, backed by wealthy trades-

man John Portwine, set up a small engineering workshop in South London in 1901. Two years later their two-cylinder 10hp and four-cylinder 20hp models were exhibited at the British Motor Show.

By 1904 the firm was known as Autocar & Accessories and its 5.6hp single-cylinder Autocar tricycle was the "in" goods vehicle for firms such as Maple & Co, Dickens & Jones, and the Goodyear Tyre Company.

In 1907 Autocar & Accessories used the AC abbreviation for the first time and the firm changed its name to Autocarriers Limited. After the First World War, showrooms and offices were opened in London's Regent Street and racing driver S. F. Edge joined the Board of Directors. Weller and Portwine resigned, Edge became chairman and AC Cars was formed.

What can a Rolls-Royce Silver Spur do? Change your entire approach to life, discovers Vaughan Freeman

Onlookers could only think that we had won the Lottery

Want to know what a Lottery winner feels like? Forget the roll-over, drive a Rolls-Royce for the weekend and you too can experience the life-changing sensation of seeing your numbers come up.

Heads turned and jaws dropped at "our" Silver Spur, and you could read their thoughts etched across onlookers' foreheads. The family Freeman, sadly, do not look like Rolls-Royce owners.

So for passers-by there could only be one explanation as we piled out. The Lottery must have waved its wand. And who were we to disabuse them? The feeling was delicious.

A Rolls-Royce does more than just turn heads. Like blue crystal pyramids, meditation or any other secret solution to universal problems, the Rolls-Royce Silver Spur improves your dress and your behaviour. It's true. For my first drive in the Spur I felt compelled to shave, polish my boots and put on a shirt and tie. I wanted to look my best for this car.

A Rolls-Royce is unlike any other car, and this £155,000 Silver Spur is unlike any other Rolls-Royce. Just sitting by the roadside it somehow expects higher standards, and taking the wheel dressed only in jeans was just not an option.

So, suitably dressed in best flannels, where to go? Living in Brighton there was just one choice, and we all piled in for the two-mile trip to afternoon tea at the Grand Hotel. As we pulled up, a thoughtful doorman removed a Cavalier parked outside and we slid into the vacated place where the Spur sat unmolested on double yellow lines.

Having done its best for my dress code, the Spur turned its attention to my driving. The Spur would transform even the most road-raging driver into Captain Courtesy, to the point where Rolls-Royce could do worse than inscribe a "Gentle Wait" mode on its column-mounted automatic gearshift. For though the Spur will reach 140mph, our speed during a weekend trip to the Isle of Wight rarely climbed above 60mph. Even reaching the motorway speed limit



Family treasures: Ben and Emily made full use of the video screens, headsets and fridge in the rear — but not the walnut cocktail cabinets

would have required an un-Spur like rush of blood.

Its huge dimensions, almost 18 feet long and nearly seven feet wide, plus the erratic heart rate whenever another vehicle approached the immaculate paintwork, means all turns, stops and starts are done in virtual slow motion. Suddenly I was driving as if half-way through my test, full of caution and courtesy.

The car's wallowing road manners only help the Manners Makteth Motorist approach. At the wheel the feel is rather like piloting a small bungalow. Over speeding policemen the car's prow and rear dip and climb like a

frigate in a rough sea. Indeed, the feel of the Isle of Wight ferry was very like that of the Spur on the move.

Such considerations are not what the Spur is about though. Instead of making the Spur shorter and easier to park, the Rolls-Royce solution is much more fun. Sensors set into the rear bumper and linked to an array of red, green and yellow warning lights, tell the reversing driver how far he or she is from obstacles to the rear. As the car backs up, lights change from green through to red until a disco-dance of light with all three flashing merrily tell you it is time to stop.

From the outside, the Spur

is awesome. A simple "wow" from a young lad as we parked behind his father's Rover said it all. Inside it is more like a toy palace. Video screens fitted into the back of the front-seat headrests meant six-year old Ben and eight-year old Emily saw little of the motorway, but did see most of their favourite *Hundred And One Dalmatians* tape. The stereo system also allowed them to listen to their *Just William* cassettes using headphones without bothering the grown-ups in the front.

A fridge tucked behind the rear-seat armrest kept the Ribena at just the right temperature, and there are games

too for the driver and front-seat passenger, including bottom warmers and the sort of carpets it's worth taking your socks off for. Three mobile phones should be enough for even the busiest on-the-move executive, and for the chauffeur-driven there are elegant high-gloss wooden cabinets to hold the cut-glass whisky decanters and goblets.

Nobody asks if a Rolls-Royce goes, whether it will last, or if it is prone to rust. Of course it goes, and if cared for will go on for ever, albeit in its own idiosyncratic drive-of-yesteryear manner. If you want to hustle and bustle through narrow country lanes, roar off

from traffic lights and clip the apex of every corner, then this is not the car for you.

If, on the other hand, you are happy to allow an extra half-hour for every journey and want a car that you get out of only reluctantly, then the Spur could be the answer. There are other benefits too. Having been told there was no room at the inn, I returned to the car to continue searching for a hotel room only to be stopped by a member of the hotel staff, who, having seen the Spur, came out to say that they did have a room after all.

For the anti-car lobby the Spur must seem a propaganda godsend. Times have changed

SILVER SPUR

Engine: 6.75-litre turbo V8 petrol driving rear wheels through four-speed electronically controlled automatic gearbox (maximum power not disclosed). Performance: 0-60mph, 7.9secs; top speed 140mph. Dimensions: length, 17ft 5in, width, 6ft 11in, height, 4ft 10in. Economy: 11.3mpg urban, 16.2mpg overall. Equipment: Lashings of polished walnut, full hide buttoned upholstery and Wilton deep-pile carpet. Extras: mobile phones, twin video screens, bottle cooler, cocktail cabinet, remote cordless telephone system. Price: £135,242.50. With extras, £154,291.50.

and even would-be Royce owners ask how many miles it does to the gallon. The answer is that fuel consumption is much improved, and is now a creditable 21.9mpg out of town, but that falls to 11.3mpg for urban driving.

Such worries have done little to halt Rolls-Royce sales, which total 1,278 in the first nine months of this year, up 18 per cent, with sales in Britain particularly strong: ahead by 34 per cent. Key to the sales surge, says Rolls-Royce, is the continuing technical and design improvements in their cars, helped by analysis of feedback from customers.

The message coming from Rolls-Royce owners is that their cars are being used more often and are covering more miles, especially with businessmen and women who work in the back of their chauffeured car on the way to yet another meeting. In a car like the Spur, which can be fitted with a fax machine as easily as mobile phones, such trips mean executives can contact their offices without the embarrassment of using mobile phones on trains.

Is my snoring spouse about to crash out?

Q Most people have a snooze after their Christmas turkey. Not my husband. He sleeps anywhere, any time and snores as loudly as a jet engine. What can I do to stop him, doctor?

A Something quickly. I know this diagnosis will sound a little odd, but snorers have a tendency to crash their cars a lot. Snorers sleep badly and often suffer dire consequences as a result.

Q You mean my old man, who seldom ever seems fully awake, is in danger of nodding off at the wheel while he is driving along?

A Particularly that. But they are also dozier, with slower reaction times. The *Respiratory Journal* this week published a study of men with something called sleep apnoea; they stop breathing briefly and then start with a loud snort. It can happen a hundred times a night, depriving the sufferer of rest and turning them into zombies by day.

Q Sounds disgusting — a bit like my husband. Can anything help, short of a paper bag over his head?

A Apparently, yes. He needs nasal continuous positive airway pressure (NCPAP to us doctors). The treatment supplies a constant pressure of air through a nasal mask so that the snorer breathes regularly and doesn't miss out on sleep. Neither does anyone else accustomed to listening to them.

Q Thank goodness for that. He has been driving me mad. Does it mean that after treatment he will be awake during the day as well?

A Incredible but true. You will have his undivided, bright-eyed attention all day — if you can stand it. One other thing, he will be safer on the roads, too. The researchers discovered that the snorers who had a dose of NCPAP were five times safer on the road. The rehabilitated snorers stopped dropping off for a nap at the wheel and being so startled from their slumbers that they did all manner of daft things. So go seek out the treatment quickly and stop that man from snoring his life away.

Q That's OK for you to say. But nothing is going to happen until after the Christmas holidays now. What on earth can I do in the meantime?

A Hmmmm. Rule out the paper bag. That could go horribly wrong — and you would lose out on the insurance money. The easiest solution is to invest in a decent pair of earplugs for night attire to shut out the racket — and a get sharp stick for daytime so you can dig him hard in the ribs every time his head drops. Sometimes you just have to be cruel to be kind. And cruel can be so much fun — especially at Christmas.

David Long on the victorious limousines that Lawrence of Arabia priced above rubies



An armoured car, left, of the Duke of Westminster's Unit in the Western desert, 1915. On hard sand, they could hit 65mph. The 1914 40/50hp example, right, is kept at an Indian museum



According to Lawrence of Arabia, "A Rolls in the desert is above rubies." And as well he might after a desert campaign in which one single, well-documented day, he and his men crossed a landscape strewn with rock and sand in three armoured-plated Rolls-Royces and obliterated two enemy command posts, blew up a bridge, wiped out almost an entire cavalry regiment and destroyed many miles of railway line.

Throughout his famous campaign, Colonel T. E. Lawrence's driver was one S. C. Rolls, no relation to the marquis's founder, and Lawrence later characterised their adventures together as "fighting de luxe". When his victorious campaign across the Middle East was all over he wrote that "all the Turks in Arabia could not fight a single Rolls-Royce armoured car on open country. They were worth hundreds of men to us in these deserts".

In terrible conditions, his cars proved almost unbreakable. When the suspension on one of them finally did give way, Lawrence replaced it with three wooden slats cut to size by shots from his revolver, a saw being unavailable so far from home. Bound together with captured telegraph wire, this temporary leaf-spring lasted another three weeks, by which time Lawrence had reached Damascus in triumph.

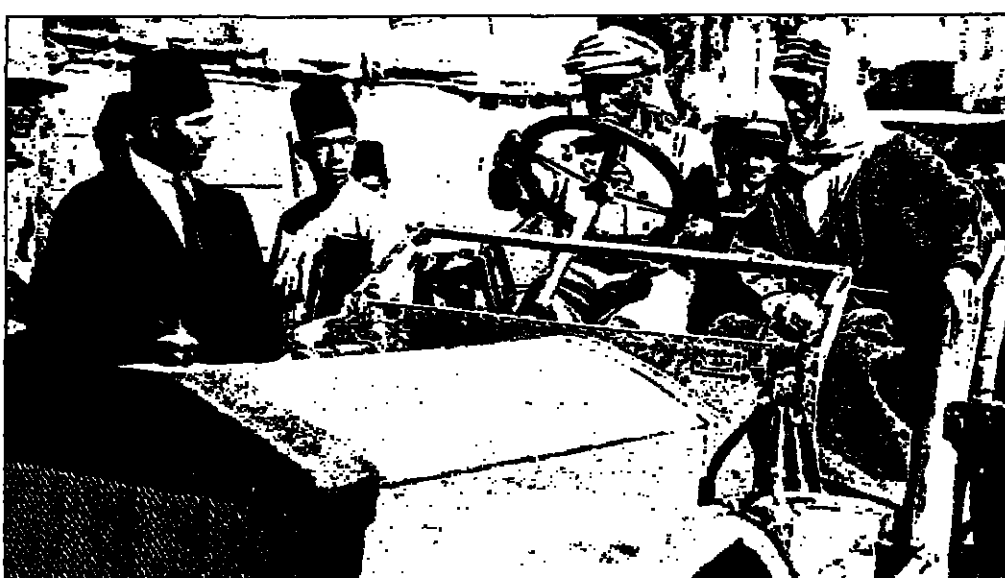
But although he was one of their most ardent admirers, Lawrence was not the first to take "the Best Car in the World" to war. Indeed, the very day after hostilities started, Julian Orde, the

secretary of the Royal Automobile Club in Pall Mall arranged for four Rolls-Royces and their drivers to carry the King's Messengers through France.

Before long, rich and titled owners were handing their cars over to the Government for official duties, among them Earl of Rotherham who later proved Lawrence's claim that it was "almost impossible to break a Rolls-Royce" when he was forced to swing a sledgehammer at it in order to disable his car to prevent it falling into enemy hands.

But the most celebrated was Bendor, second Duke of Westminster, who formed up with a number of volunteers in the Royal Automobile Club Corps. They included James Radley, who before the war had successfully rallied Rolls-Royces and, keen for adventure, Bendor's band of brothers soon became a familiar sight driving up and down the lines in their Rolls-Royces, taking pot-shots at the Germans.

Impressed by Bendor's example, Winston Churchill lent official support to these new armoured "land ships". With his considerable backing and the expertise of a leading ship designer at the Admiralty, Captain Eustace Tennyson D'Encourt, growing numbers of Rolls-Royce



Sheikh, battle and Rolls Lawrence of Arabia, right, in Damascus with war-worn limousine

40/50hp Silver Ghosts were kitted out for war.

The principal modifications included reinforced axles, more than three tons of armour plating three-eighths of an inch thick, a crude but effective five-foot diameter steel cylinder for a turret and a devastating Vickers-Maxim machine gun.

The size and strength of the standard Silver Ghost, as well as

its redoubtable performance and impressive reliability, made it ideal for war work. Despite the heavy armouring, speeds of up to 65mph were possible over hard sand making it a formidable fighting machine. Other Ghosts found their way into service as ambulances, where their excellent ride quality and quietness were equally important.

In addition, almost three-quarters of all aeroplane engines used by the British armed forces from 1914-18 were Rolls-Royces. The most famous, the Eagle, was an adaptation of the Ghost's seven-litre, six-cylinder engine. This became Henry Royce's chief contribution to victory although, no lover of aircraft since 1909 when his business partner died in a flying competition, he probably preferred the distinction his

Ghost achieved when serving on the ground.

Westminster certainly did, and captivated by the potential of the armoured Rolls-Royce, Bendor eventually provided twelve cars from his estates in London, France and at Eaton Hall in Cheshire.

These were converted at his own expense, and the Duke gave each of them a pugnacious name such as *Bulldog*, *Biter*, *Blast* or *Bloodhound*, before taking command of three armoured car Squadrons, the first Englishman to do so.

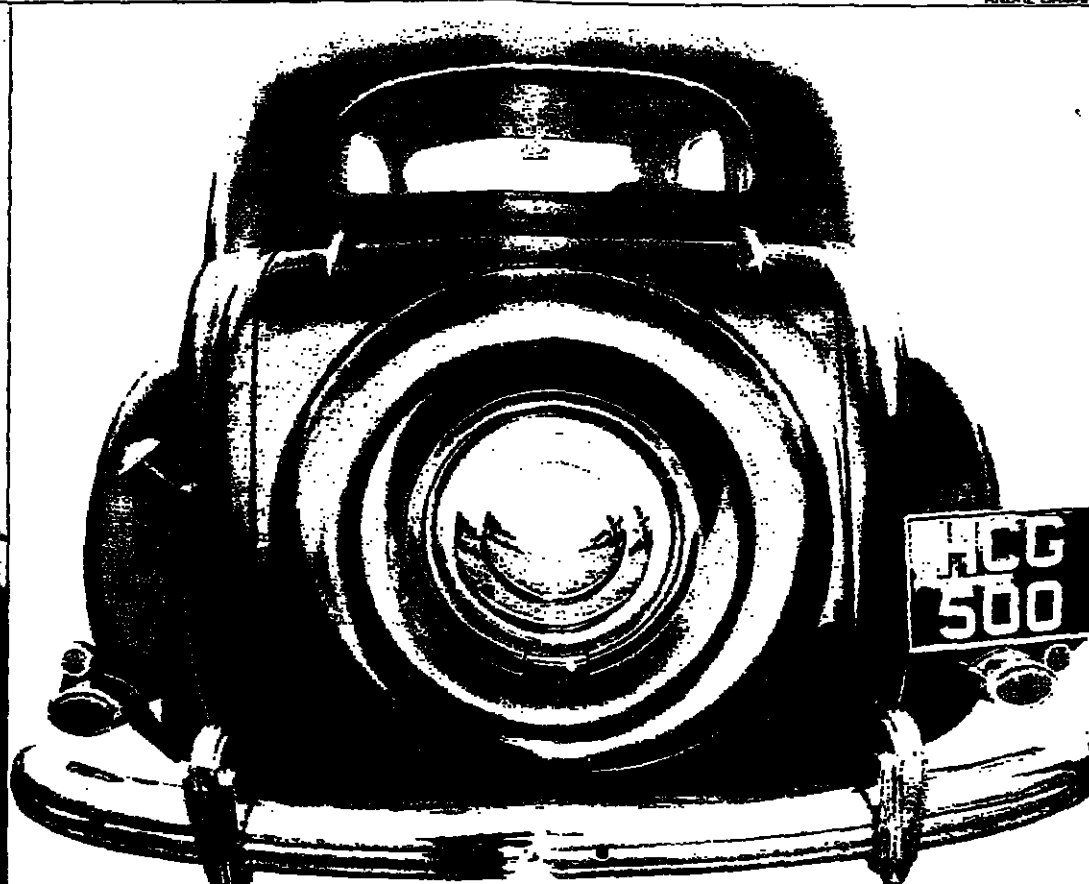
The Duke and his cars were eventually shipped south to replace the Naval Armoured Car Brigade in the desert fight against the Senussi tribesmen. By then he had already demonstrated the capabilities of the new machines when one of them withstood more than an hour of concentrated gunfire before capturing the German stronghold of Roissel on the Western Front.

Preferring the nobility of horse riding, many traditional cavalry officers still did not welcome the arrival of what one described as "these noisy, smelly machines". But after the second Battle of Ypres, *The Times* reported that, assisting the 10th Hussars, the Duke's armoured cars "did excellent work".

He and others who used them for a combination of glamorous, daring and arduous assignments were quick to acknowledge the Rolls-Royce's status as the finest armoured car of the Great War, a reputation it retains nearly 80 years later.

Stuart Birch on the 50th birthday of the high-class handsome brute that was Ford's first new postwar car

Flying Squad's favourite Pilot



Muscular bonnet conceals a 3.6-litre V8 engine that can propel the Pilot's ton-and-a-half weight at speeds up to 83mph, making it fast for its day — and popular with police drivers. Lavish equipment includes a built-in jacking system

The suspension of the Ford V8 Pilot includes "transverse semi-elliptic springs with oil-less shackles" which, roughly translated, means "Watch it!"

Peering over the bakelite dashboard, I approached the first bend with some trepidation, aiming carefully, squeezing the accelerator pedal gently to keep the bluff, ton-and-a-half machine in order. But all was well, confidence grew, and I imagined what it must have been like to drive the Pilot (aptly named, for flying squad use) in bell-clanging, tyre-squealing, body-rolling pursuit of spivs in Buicks loaded with black-market goods along misty dockland streets.

The V8 Pilot was Ford's first newly designed postwar car, and 1997 marks its 50th anniversary. It is a car which is remembered with fondness by all those who are of a certain age.

Ron Staughton certainly remembers his first close encounter with a Ford V8 Pilot. But for him there was no fondness involved: "I was on the back of a speeding motorbike in the early 1950s when I heard a bell ringing and a big, black car roared past. A blind was lowered in the back window which had the words 'Police Stop' on it. We stopped pretty snarley. It was my friend's bike. I was just a lad and looked on, but that car really made an impression on me. It was intimidating. I can still see it."

In fact, Ron can see a Pilot every day because now he has one. He is

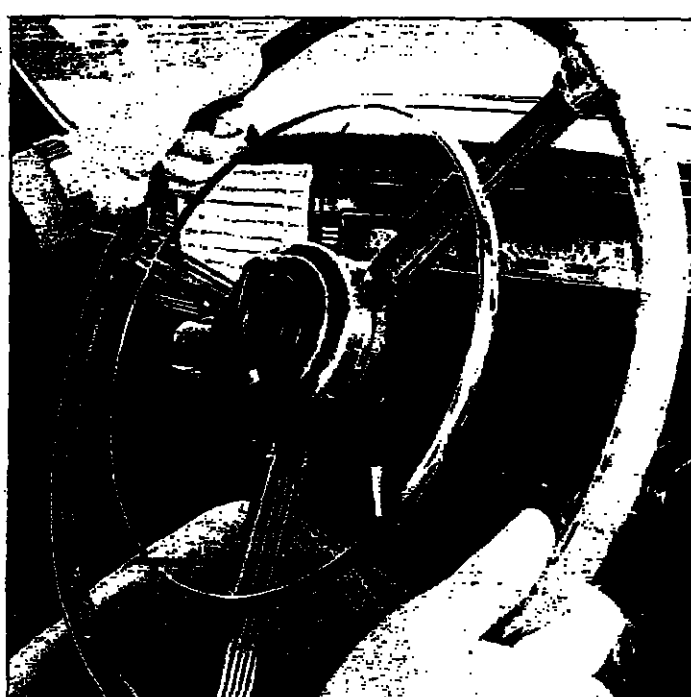
custodian of Ford's collection of historic vehicles at its Dagenham Heritage Centre, and his own car, big, black, brooding, is part of it, looting with muscly menace over more effete models with friendly names like Zephyr, Anglia, Consul, Cortina, Capri.

"The police liked the Pilot because it was powerful, with a big 3.6-litre engine and plenty of speed for its day — about 83mph — enough to catch the serious villains as well as people like us on our old motorbike."

Like many large-engined cars, the Pilot went from its prestige position at the top of Ford's model range for four years to being a near-worthless used-car buy. But now its status is assured; two years ago, Ron paid almost £4,900 for his 1949 model.

Ford built more than 22,000 Pilots during its four-year production run. Most leaving the production line at Dagenham were black in the Henry Ford tradition but a few other colours were available, including beige — but that was mainly for export to hot countries.

The 3.6-litre V8 engine which powered the Pilot first appeared in America in 1932. It was used in the Model 18F, which weighed only 25cwt and gave, in the parlance of the time, "terrific acceleration". In the dreary days of postwar Britain, Ford engineers did consider giving the Pilot a smaller 2.5-litre V8 producing far less power than the 3.6, but they changed their minds and decided to do things properly.



Ron Staughton's 1949 model has its original dashboard and radio

Part of the reason was that the car's equipment level, including a built-in four-wheel hydraulic jacking system, added weight. Autocar at the time said it was "quite lavishly equipped in the British quality tradition".

Ron's Pilot is almost original, although he has worked hard to ensure that it runs smoothly. He demonstrates how smoothly by

pushing the starter button, listening for a moment to assess tickover quality, before climbing from the car via its running board to open the bonnet by turning its aircraft mascot. He places a 50p piece on the inlet manifold. The coin doesn't tremble — quite a feat as Ford's V8 engine was a real workhorse, used to power wartime Bren gun carriers and trucks.

V8 PILOT

Engine: 3622cc V8, 85bhp.
Three-speed gearbox.
Rear-wheel drive.
Performance: 0-60mph about 20 seconds;
top speed 83mph, fuel consumption 18-22mpg.
Equipment: Opening windscreen, self-cancelling trafficators, cigar lighter, clock, three ashtrays, parcel tray beneath "walnut" finished plastic instrument board, rear window blind, "car heating device", draughtless front window ventilation (they move backwards slightly before lowering), built-in hydraulic jacks, telescopic mast for nearside front wing to allow driver to gauge car width.
Price: New (with leather upholstery) £746.22 inc purchase tax. Today, at least £5,000 for a good one.

Displayed on the Ford stand at this year's Birmingham Motor Show, Ron's car was a big attraction: "It was remarkable how many people stopped to admire it and how many remembered the Pilot."

Although it was billed as a new design in 1947, its styling and technology were really prewar: the new, three-box Ford shape was due to appear in the USA as the Fordor

and Tudor, but their modern unitary design, without the running boards and with their headlights blended into the front wings, would not arrive in Europe until the four-cylinder Consul and six-cylinder Zephyr appeared in 1950.

The Pilot looked tough and dependable, with American design overtones. It also had a clear identity. By 1949 the Ford name did not appear on the bodywork: it was known simply as the V8 Pilot, a daring piece of marketing for its time.

Ron holds the door open for me: "Try it; you'll find it easy to drive but it rolls a bit. There's a three-speed column gearchange; put it into second once you're moving, and into top by 15 mph. No need for many gearchanges after that."

So I settle on the brown leather bench seat, grip the big steering wheel with its chrome horn-ring controlling mellifluous Windtone horns, and point the Pilot towards the Dagenham horizon.

The power (30hp RAC rating, 85bhp) is impressive, the gear-change surprisingly precise, the worm-and-roller steering low-geared and light, the brakes... what brakes? It is push, push and push again to stop the Pilot's flight.

And then there was the cornering to worry about, with that crude suspension trying to cope. The car certainly rolls but it hangs on reasonably well on dry surfaces (wet would be an interesting experience), the body flexing and rattling a little over rough surfaces, a minor

problem dismissed with a joke: "This is your Pilot squeaking."

I switch on the Ekco radio, built neatly into the dashboard, and wait for its valves to warm. Stations are marked London Home, Midland Home, Medium Wave Light. The radio needs a new valve but that, like other spares, is available. Ron gets most of his from Wally Wheatley, who runs Ford V8 specialist, Nordan Services. "He's on Matching Airfield out in rural Essex. The Yanks were there in the war; he uses their old Nissen huts." Even that is in keeping with the Pilot's late-1940s image.

As the sun drops behind the Dagenham skyline and the rudimentary recirculatory heater is stirred into life, it is time to return to the Heritage Centre. The Pilot purrs to a halt, back once more to glare at its siblings, secure in its future at the museum — and only a few hundred yards from the production line where it was built almost half a century ago.

The Ford Heritage Centre can be viewed by special appointment or by visitors making arranged factory tours. Cars on show stretch from the Model T to the RS200 rally car and three-door Sierra Cosworth. Some are on loan from private individuals. The Centre has a wide variety of vehicles in store, including tractors. Ford is considering expansion of the Centre, with the possibility of open access for the general public.

CAR...TOONS



From fail to pass by changing test centre

He was the examiner from hell, the one who features in your worst pre-test nightmare.

I wanted to ride a motorcycle but I knew that a new — and substantially tougher — test arrives in January. Then candidates will have to sit a two-stage practical and written exam, similar to the new car driving test.

The rule-tightening has also led to the Driving Standards Agency writing to 283,000 motorcyclists owning machines up to 125cc to warn that if they are riding on L-plates, they must complete the compulsory basic training test before January 1 just to take to the road, though moped riders with full car licences are exempt.

In an effort to sidestep the red tape, I decided to take my test — but discovered an astonishing anomaly in the standards and attitudes towards testing which could be either personal or regional.

I booked with a training company that boasted an 85 per cent pass rate. I was there on Monday morning for a week of tuition before a Friday test. After five days, I was feeling pretty confident — until I met the examiner. I'd been told that the Driving Standard Agency's brief, to examiners was to make the examinee feel at ease, but the combination of his cold manner and his black leather attire, reminiscent of a figure out of wartime Berlin, soon put paid to that.

Throughout the 50-minute test I obediently followed the orders coming in through my

Bike test examiners seem wildly inconsistent, says Harry Stourton

radio earpiece from the examiner, who was tailing me astride a huge and formidable-looking machine. All was going according to plan, but after 25 minutes I received the order to take the second exit at the approaching roundabout.

Was this a left-hand turn, in which case I should approach it in the left hand lane, or was it a right hand turn in which case I should approach it in the right hand lane?

I went for the left-hand lane — my ultimate undoing. I found myself stuck in the inside lane of the roundabout unable to exit first time round with my examiner overtaking me. My expectation of success now severely depleted, we returned to the test centre. My fears were confirmed. I had failed.

I later learnt that I was not alone: seven out of eight of us on the course had failed, hardly the 85 per cent pass rate — nearer 8.5 per cent. The training company seemed surprised, though they decided that this one examiner had always been a problem. He was seemingly more ruthless than the others.

In spite of investing five days and £400 on a failure, January 1 and the prospect of a

and my kindly instructor was pleased to inform me that I had passed.

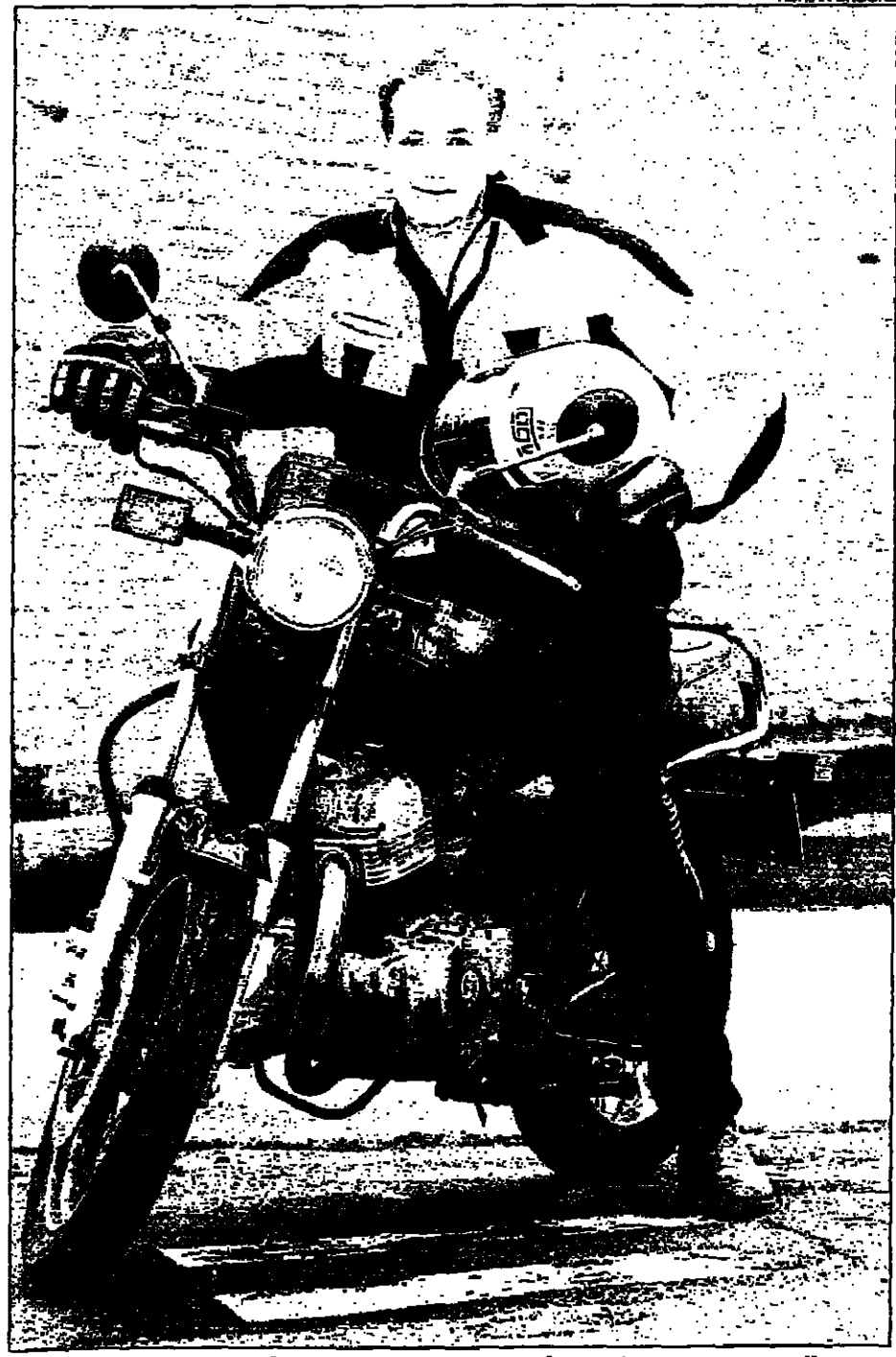
Although delighted, I felt as if I had somehow cheated by passing at a test centre where standards appeared to be more lax. I telephoned the Driving Standards Agency to enquire whether such discrepancies were common. A spokesman for the DSA was surprised: "That sounds most strange. All tests should be at least 50 minutes," although he did concede that test centres were clearly taxed due to the increased demand.

I contacted the Department of Transport, John Bowis, the minister responsible for driving tests, declined to comment, saying it was an "operational matter, not a ministerial matter", and referred me back to the DSA spokesman. Second time around the DSA informed me that there was, "nothing remarkable" about these disparities in time, that 25 minutes was the minimum legal requirement and if anything 50 minutes was too long.

Whatever, the length of the test, it was clear to me that where and when you take your test and who examines you are crucial factors. From the rigour of a test in central London to the relaxed attitudes of provincial Britain. There was no contest so far as I was concerned.

So if you really are worried about taking your motorcycle test, the message could be to head for Cheltenham... and a nice man in a car.

He tried to dart in and out of traffic to keep up with me



Harry Stourton managed to beat the introduction of a tougher new motorcycling test



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TO Box 267, Bournemouth BH1 8ZD

900	911	928	930	935	944	950	955	960	965	970	975	980	985	990	995	000	005	010	015	020	025	030	035	040	045	050	055	060	065	070	075	080	085	090	095	100	105	110	115	120	125	130	135	140	145	150	155	160	165	170	175	180	185	190	195	200	205	210	215	220	225	230	235	240	245	250	255	260	265	270	275	280	285	290	295	300	305	310	315	320	325	330	335	340	345	350	355	360	365	370	375	380	385	390	395	400	405	410	415	420	425	430	435	440	445	450	455	460	465	470	475	480	485	490	495	500	505	510	515	520	525	530	535	540	545	550	555	560	565	570	575	580	585	590	595	600	605	610	615	620	625	630	635	640	645	650	655	660	665	670	675	680	685	690	695	700	705	710	715	720	725	730	735	740	745	750	755	760	765	770	775	780	785	790	795	800	805	810	815	820	825	830	835	840	845	850	855	860	865	870	875	880	885	890	895	900	905	910	915	920	925	930	935	940	945	950	955	960	965	970	975	980	985	990	995	1000	1005	1010	1015	1020	1025	1030	1035	1040	1045	1050	1055	1060	1065	1070	1075	1080	1085	1090	1095	1100	1105	1110	1115	1120	1125	1130	1135	1140	1145	1150	1155	1160	1165	1170	1175	1180	1185	1190	1195	1200	1205	1210	1215	1220	1225	1230	1235	1240	1245	1250	1255	1260	1265	1270	1275	1280	1285	1290	1295	1300	1305	1310	1315	1320	1325	1330	1335	1340	1345	1350	1355	1360	1365	1370	1375	1380	1385	1390	1395	1400	1405	1410	1415	1420	1425	1430	1435	1440	1445	1450	1455	1460	1465	1470	1475	1480	1485	1490	1495	1500	1505	1510	1515	1520	1525	1530	1535	1540	1545	1550	1555	1560	1565	1570	1575	1580	1585	1590	1595	1600	1605	1610	1615	1620	1625	1630	1635	1640	1645	1650	1655	1660	1665	1670	1675	1680	1685	1690	1695	1700	1705	1710	1715	1720	1725	1730	1735	1740	1745	1750	1755	1760	1765	1770	1775	1780	1785	1790	1795	1800	1805	1810	1815	1820	1825	1830	1835	1840	1845	1850	1855	1860	1865	1870	1875	1880	1885	1890	1895	1900	1905	1910	1915	1920	1925	1930	1935	1940	1945	1950	1955	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050	2055	2060	2065	2070	2075	2080	2085	2090	2095	2100	2105	2110	2115	2120	2125	2130	2135	2140	2145	2150	2155	2160	2165	2170	2175	2180	2185	2190	2195	2200	2205	2210	2215	2220	2225	2230	2235	2240	2245	2250	2255	2260	2265	2270	2275	2280	2285	2290	2295	2300	2305	2310	2315	2320	2325	2330	2335	2340	2345	2350	2355	2360	2365	2370	2375	2380	2385	2390	2395	2400	2405	2410	2415	2420	2425	2430	2435	2440	2445	2450	2455	2460	2465	2470	2475	2480	2485	2490	2495	2500	2505	2510	2515	2520	2525	2530	2535	2540	2545	2550	2555	2560	2565	2570	2575	2580	2585	2590	2595	2600	2605	2610	2615	2620	2625	2630	2635	2640	2645	2650	2655	2660	2665	2670	2675	2680	2685	2690	2695	2700	2705	2710	2715	2720	2725	2730	2735	2740	2745	2750	2755	2760	2765	2770	2775	2780	2785	2790	2795	2800	2805	2810	2815	2820	2825	2830	2835	2840	2845	2850	2855	2860	2865	2870	2875	2880	2885	2890	2895	2900	2905	2910	2915	2920	2925	2930	2935	2940	2945	2950	2955	2960	2965	2970	2975	2980	2985	2990	2995	3000	3005	3010	3015	3020	3025	3030	3035	3040	3045	3050	3055	3060	3065	3070	3075	3080	3085	3090	3095	3100	3105	3110	3115	3120	3125	3130	3135	3140	3145	3150	3155	3160	3165	3170	3175	3180	3185	3190	3195	3200	3205	3210	3215	3220	3225	3230	3235	3240	3245	3250	3255	3260	3265	3270	3275	3280	3285	3290	3295	3300	3305	3310	3315	3320	3325	3330	3335	3340	3345	3350	3355	3360	3365	3370	3375	3380	3385	3390	3395	3400	3405	3410	3415	3420	3425	3430	3435	3440	3445	3450	3455	3460	3465	3470	3475	3480	3485	3490	3495	3500	3505	3510	3515	3520	3525	3530	3535	3540	3545	3550	3555	3560	3565	3570	3575	3580	3585	3590	3595	3600	3605	3610	3615	3620	3625	3630	3635	3640	3645	3650	3655	3660	3665	3670	3675	3680	3685	3690	3695	3700	3705	3710	3715	3720	3725	3730	3735	3740	3745	3750	3755	3760	3765	3770	3775	3780	3785	3790	3795	3800	3805	3810	3815	3820	3825	3830	3835	3840	3845	3850	3855	3860	3865	3870	3875	3880	3885	3890	3895	3900	3905	3910	3915	3920	3925	3930	3935	3940	3945	3950	3955	3960	3965	3970	3975	3980	3985	3990	3995	4000	4005	4010	4015	4020	4025	4030	4035	4040	4045	4050	4055	4060	4065	4070	4075	4080	4085	4090	4095	4100	4105	4110	4115	4120	4125	4130	4135	4140	4145	4150	4155	4160	4165	4170	4175	4180	4185	4190	4195	4200	4205	4210	4215	4220	4225	4230	4235	4240	4245	4250	4255	4260	4265	4270	4275	4280	4285	4290	4295	4300	4305	4310	4315	4320	4325	4330	4335	4340	4345	4350	4355	4360	4365	4370	4375	4380	4385	4390	4395	4400	4405	4410	4415	4420	4425	4430	4435	4440	4445	4450	4455	4460	4465	4470	4475	4480	4485	4490	4495	4500	4505	4510	4515	4520	4525	4530	4535	4540	4545	4550	4555	4560	4565	4570	4575	4580	4585	4590	4595	4600	4605	4610	4615	4620	4625	4630	4635	4640	4645	4650	4655	4660	4665	4670	4675	4680	4685	4690	4695	4700	4705	4710	4715	4720	4725	4730	4735	4740	4745	4750	4755	4760	4765	4770	4775	4780	4785	4790	4795	4800	4805	4810	4815	4820	4825	4830	4835	4840	4845	4850	4855	4860	4865	4870	4875	4880	4885	4890	4895	4900	4905	4910	4915	4920	4925	4930	4935	4940	4945	4950	4955	4960	4965	4970	4975	4980	4985	4990	4995	5000	5005	5010	5015	5020	5025	5030	5035	5040	5045	5050	5055	5060	5065	5070	5075	5080	5085	5090	5095	5100	5105	5110	5115	5120	5125	5130	5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